

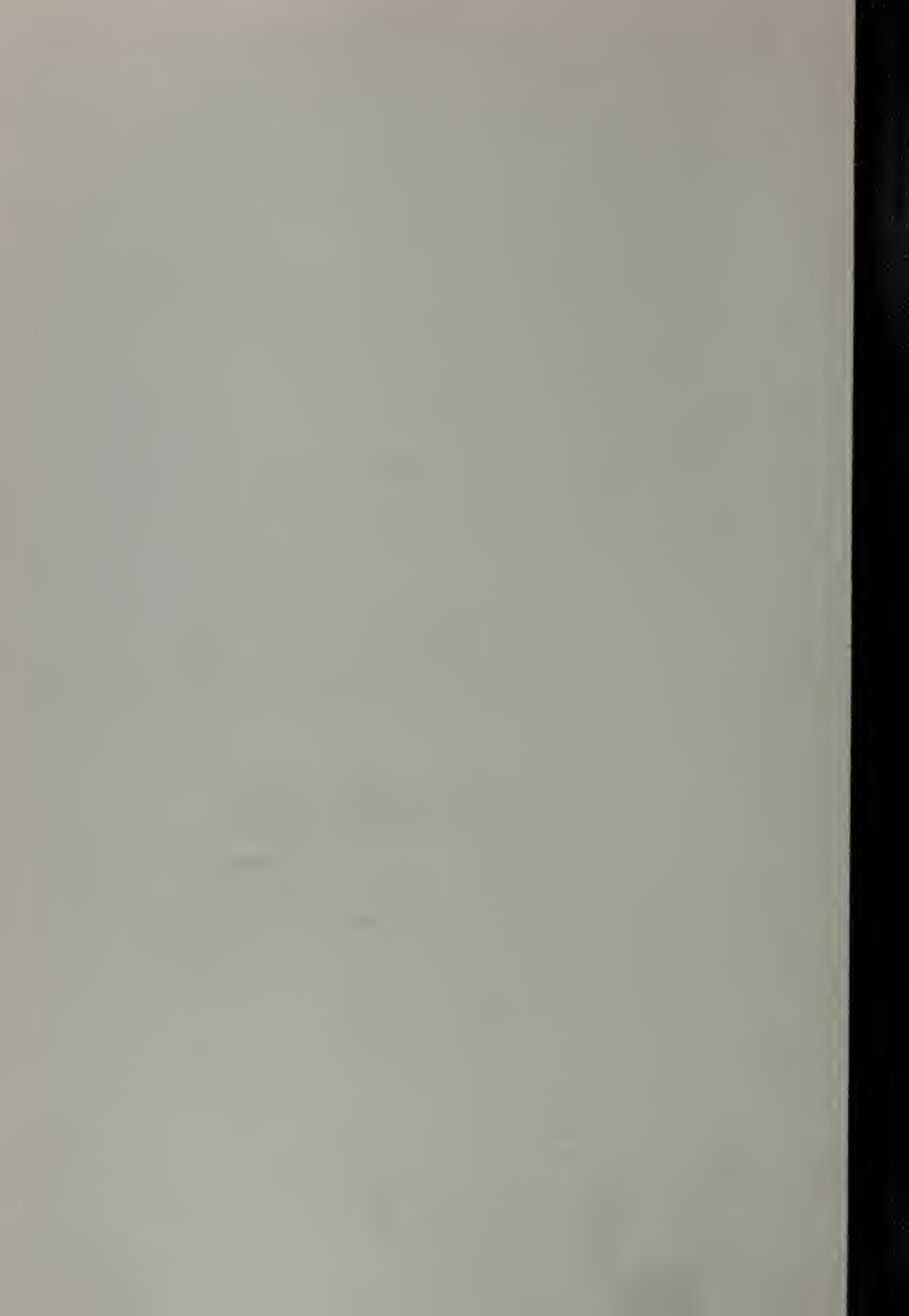
HISTORY OF MUSIC IN SAN FRANCISCO SERIES  
VOLUME FIVE: 1940

# FIFTY LOCAL PRODIGIES

1906 - 1940



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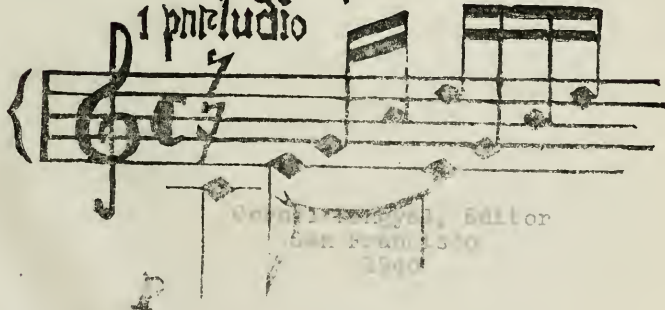
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Well Tempered Clavier

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FIFTY

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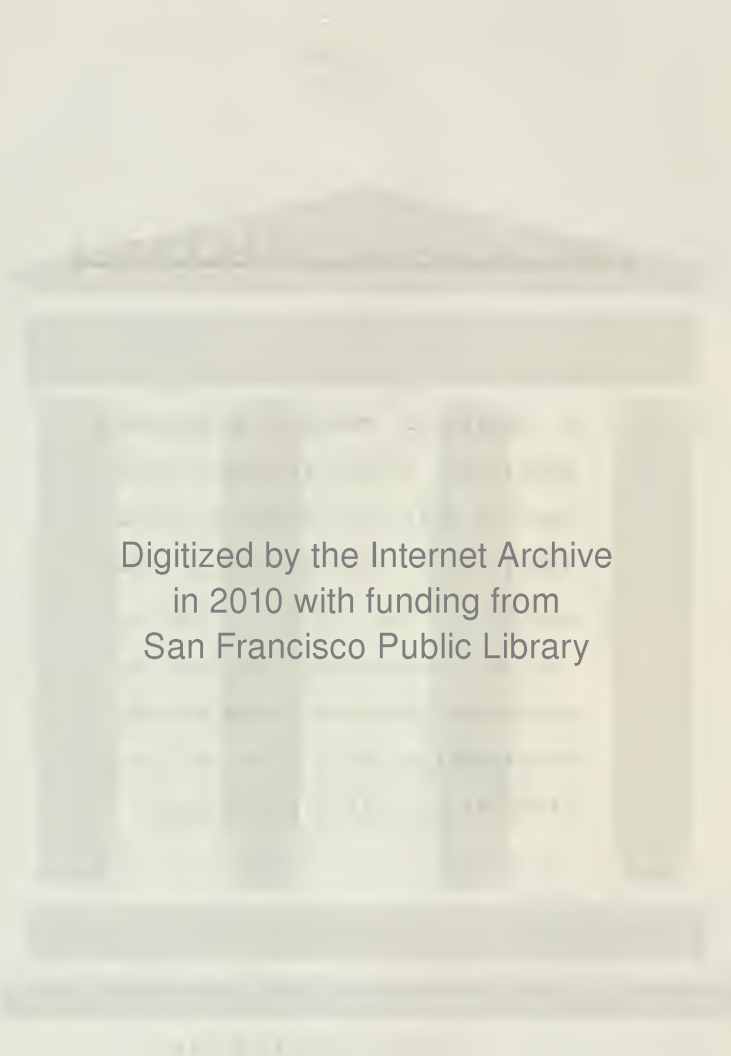
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VOLUME  
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F I F T Y   L O C A L   P R O D I G I E S

A survey of musical prodigies developed in San Francisco during the past four decades (1900-1940), with additional data presented in the form of graphs, tables, appendices on patrons, pedagogues, conservatories, schools, scholarships, and a selected list of bibliographical references.

Cornel Lengyel, Editor  
San Francisco  
1940



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## NOTE ON PRODIGIES

A prodigy, says Noah Webster, is a wonder, a marvel, an abnormal or extraordinary person.

Ordinarily, then, he should be singular. Our title, Fifty Local Prodigies -- implying, as it were, a profusion of wonders and a multiplicity of marvels all confined within a small section of time and space -- may seem at first glance somewhat paradoxical. Yet, one can quickly discover by turning the following pages that more than 50 infant musical wonders have developed in San Francisco during the past 40 years.

Most of these have exhibited amazing virtuosity in performing at an early age musical compositions of great difficulty. They are extraordinary little persons who answer Mr. Webster's description satisfactorily. Yet definitions are often a delusion. They attempt to explain the unknown in terms of the known and frequently serve but to embroider the ambiguous.

### 1. Definition.

What is a prodigy? A line must be drawn between prodigious mechanical dexterity and genuine musical art -- between reproductive talent and productive genius. Interpreters in any field of art must of necessity occupy a secondary rank. The art of recreation is not on a par with the art of creation. Many so-called prodigies and near-prodigies are 9-day wonders, more entitled to appear with the Ringling Brothers than on the concert platform.





To make a further distinction, there is a difference between having genius and being a genius. As Mr. Edgar Varese has pointed out, Beethoven is a genius; Yehudi Menuhin, the most important prodigy included in this study, merely has genius.

There have been prodigies in every generation -- prodigies in chess and mathematics, as well as in music. John Stuart Mill spoke Greek and Latin before he was 10; Thomas Chatterton, dying at 17, still occupies a place in English poetry; Shirley Temple may be considered a prodigy of the cinema.

What particularly attracts in the performance of the musical Wunderkinder perhaps is the element of abnormality. The public is drawn to the phenomenal. The amazing technique, the apparent virtuosity of a child tends to take attention away from the lack of coordination between technical facility and true musical expression. The prodigy's success in interpretation is often due to imitation and not derived from a true inner and personal source.

Considering the child wonders produced in San Francisco -- many of whom have been publicly hailed as consummate artists and critically proclaimed as infant Mozarts and infant Paganinis -- the impartial observer may well be somewhat skeptical.

Indeed, it is necessary to distinguish between those who carry a spark of the authentic fire and those who spurt



like Roman candles -- flaring and effective for the moment, but quick to fizzle out; to distinguish between that rarest of apparitions, the true child-artist, a plastic nature capable of progressive maturing, unfoldment, and ripening, and revealing from the beginning a richness of spirit -- and, on the other hand, the velvet-pantalooned clockwork doll, the marvelous marionette who can play all the right notes, keep correct time, follow the dynamics, and be no musician.

## 2. Factors Contributing to Local Development.

Why have a comparatively large number of prodigies developed in San Francisco? Few other cities in America can approach the local record. Few other communities would find it worthwhile to sponsor a similar research work.

The chief reason lies perhaps in the chance combination of three elements: the person of high talent, the person to train the talent, and the person to finance the procedure -- the accidental meeting of prodigy, pedagogue, and patron. Because of the size, the wealth, and general musical culture of the city -- in a population of nearly 750,000, there are at present (1940) approximately 3000 music teachers -- at least a score of these combinations have occurred. An appendix to this volume contains the biographies of prominent local patrons of music.

One can hardly emphasize sufficiently the influence of master teachers -- of widely known pedagogues such as



Mansfeldt, Weill, Persinger, Elkus, Shorr, Blinder, De Grassi, Anker, and Ryss, among others. The most skillful educator draws out what is latent in the child's temperament, leads him to discover his most intimate inner consciousness, helps him by suggestion to recognize the uniqueness, the key, nuance, and precise expression of his individuality. Of course, a teacher of such insight is a rarity. Prodigies become artists at times in spite of their early training; others are retarded for years and prefer to forget or ignore their first preceptors; only a few meet with the right teachers at the very beginning.

Patronage has been equally important. About half the prodigies considered in this book come of poor parents or from families of lower middle-class income, unable to pay for the children's training. Patrons who could be persuaded to sponsor them were essential. In many cases, parents and teachers joined forces in search of the patron -- whose patronage often proved uncertain, elusive, or unavailable.

The percentage of talented children in the population may be much higher than appears. Incipient prodigies may romp in any schoolyard. Were funds available for their development, their number might well be multiplied. Instead of 50, our study might include 500 local prodigies. Florence, a city of one-tenth the size of San Francisco, produced during 3 generations of the Renaissance more than 2000 persons of genius.



is its civic interest in the arts, music particularly. This is evidenced by its support of a municipal symphony, opera, chorus, band, and other music-making bodies. Although this custom has prevailed in European centers for centuries, in America such public subsidization of the arts is still a novelty.

Even the climate makes a contribution. Its invigorating quality stimulates practice. It is conducive to mental concentration and effort. Naoum Blinder, who has trained many of the children included in this book, believes that it is a most important factor. It resembles closely the climate of Odessa where Mr. Blinder himself was a prodigy and where a great number of prodigies developed around him.

In brief, then, the chief factors contributing to the development of local prodigies may be summarized as follows:

1. Inheritance of special musical aptitude.
2. Availability of excellent pedagogues.
3. Patronage on part of wealthy music-lovers.
4. Desire of parents for financial gain, prestige.
5. Imitation of already successful child artists.
6. Scholarships from schools and conservatories.
7. Sponsoring by music clubs and societies.
8. Contests, prizes, symphony auditions.
9. Stimulating climate and environment.
10. General civic interest in music.





### 3. Background.

Notable among the prodigies of the period are Enid Brandt, Cecil Cowlos, Laura Dubman, Lajos Fenster, Grisha Goluboff, Peter Paul Loyanich, Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin, Lina Pagliuhi, Ruggiero Ricci, Reah Sadowski, Ruth Slenczynski, Alma Stenzel, and Isaac Stern. Previous to the four decades under consideration, Albert Elkus (b. 1884) was the first and most outstanding boy prodigy produced in California.

Concerning national and racial derivations, the prodigies treated show a diversity of backgrounds. They are of Anglo-American, Filipino, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Russian, Polish, and Spanish origins. Incidentally, the Russian revolution of 1917 had echoes in local concert halls -- a decade later: many families of Jewish origin and belonging for the most part to the petty bourgeoisie left for the New World. Their offspring furnish the larger part of the prodigies included in this study. A similar situation occurred in 1848 when during the European revolutions of the time hundreds of French and German musicians escaped to California, founding many of the first local music societies.

It is interesting to note the prevalence of prodigies of Jewish origin. Nearly two-thirds of those included are Jewish -- and of these the majority are of Russian or Polish-born Jewish parentage. The proportion of Jews in music has always been high, of course. They seem to have an



affinity for the medium. And frequently, the long intense and concentrated emotional experience of the race crystallizes in children of remarkable sensitivity, emotional range, and maturity. Given favorable conditions, this quality manifests itself in music -- which of all the arts is most transcendental and which communicates emotion most directly.

The occupations of prodigies' parents range from day-laborers to artists and inventors. Nearly one-half are professional musicians. More than one-half had musical background.\*

Nevertheless, even when heredity, environment, racial and socio-economic origins are known, the appearance of great talent remains a mystery, a play of nature, unpredictable, spontaneous. The whys and wherefores of prodigies can not be determined in the laboratory. We deal with imponderables, with unconscious racial compulsions, generic memories, emotional susceptibilities, psychic phenomena -- a wilderness of intangibles wherein the imaginative psychoanalyst may wander most freely. The statistical research work in heredity of Galton, Mendel, Pearson, and others, serves to classify backgrounds, origins, environmental influences. They show that no accurate generalization can be made concerning the appearance of genius or prodigious talent. Otherwise, experimentally-minded eugonists, following Plato's lead, might be tempted to populate the globe with prodigies.

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\* See Appendix B, Tables 1-3, page 175.



#### 4: Selection.

During the period covered by this study (1900-1940) a number of objective tests, however, have been developed for determining musical aptitude. Monographs and theses on the subject may be found in most university libraries.\*

Perhaps the two most vital proofs of high musical gifts -- apart from evidence of mechanical dexterity -- are evidenced by a sense of absolute or "perfect" pitch and a capacity for analysing complex musical combinations -- chords, discords, and even mere noise.

Aptitudes in this field are extremely varied. The range of persons includes almost the whole register of musical sound, and there are children who accurately recognize the pitch and quality of sounds not only of musical instruments but of automobile horns, factory whistles, bells, glasses, and the human voice, as well. Complicating their gift of perfect pitch some persons identify sounds by attaching specific color-values to individual sounds. One of the earliest San Francisco prodigies treated in this study -- Enid Brandt -- exhibited this phenomenon, known as synaesthesia. She was the subject of a psychological study by Dr. Carl Renz, a San Francisco physician, and was herself writing a book on her synaesthetic experiences at the time of her unexpected death in 1916.

Though the number of musical prodigies examined in this study is too small to permit generalizations, it is

\*See Kries, Révész, Scafer, Stumpf, etc. on psychology of musical talent. Also, Binet-Simon, Bobertag, Goddard, Jaederholm, Terman, Thorndike, Whipple, Yerkes, etc.



interesting to note that according to the graphs based on data compiled, the age when first signs of unusual musical predilection in the child become manifest is definitely between 4 and 5. The length of study required before debut seems to be about 2 years. The age at first professional appearance is between 8 and 13.\*

Generally, one might state that the musical prodigy seems to be precocious not only in music but in the whole scope of his mental and emotional life. He may be placed on a par with persons much older. The original self-confident child element is often lacking in him, -- he thinks little of childish things -- but he is not a real adult, being without the real experience of life which mature persons possess. An old soul in a child's body, Thomas Mann has described his interior life in his poignant short story, The Infant Prodigy.

Yet, in spite of their youth, it is fundamentally wrong to assume that children do not possess a rich variety of feelings and emotions. According to Dr. Géza Révész who made a special study of Ervin Nyiregyhazi in his Psychology of a Musical Prodigy (1919), it is easy to underrate the emotional life of children, and their own consciousness of it. It is easy to overlook their capacity for introspection, since in their intercourse with grown-up people, they very often have little command of that most subtle of all means of expression -- speech. They still use it clumsily and they do not understand, as yet, either the complexities of \*See Appendices D and E, P. 176-7.





expression or the fine shades of accentuation. Discussing Nyiregyházi as a child-composer, Dr. Révész remarks:

"It is very difficult to arrive at a thorough comprehension of the emotional life of a child, for this reason, if for no other, that a child behaves towards grown-up people like a snail, and you touch it even on the surface it draws back into its shell. A child is usually distrustful of older people, and very rarely tells them its hopes and expectations, therefore these remain hidden from them.

"If, at any time, these feelings, emotions and desires see the light, we are astonished at the depth and wealth of emotional experience which lie hidden in the child's soul, and we realize how often we have misunderstood and underrated children, for the simple reason that we know little or nothing of the workings of their minds.

"Where children have a gift for music, it is a great blessing, for they possess a splendid medium for the free and unhampered expression of their emotions, and they reveal themselves in song and sound."

What happens to prodigies as they mature? A small number actually achieve places as concert artists. Others wind up their careers in teaching or in domesticity -- safely lost at last in comfortable mediocrity.

The popular notion that boy wonders often go to the dogs has some basis of truth. Many remain socially maladjusted. Many on reaching maturity experience a reaction against the forced control of their childhood and lose all self-discipline. Ervin Nyiregyházi has recently left the Federal Music Project (WPA) for unemployed musicians in Los Angeles. For years unable to do concert work, he has, however, started practising in earnest once more and is now on a tour.



"How difficult it is to be a prodigy," remarked Josef Hofmann not long ago on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee "and then to come back later and hope to be accepted as a mature artist. So many times I've heard this comment: We heard him when he was nine, a wonderful boy! But he hasn't lived up to his promise. I think a prodigy should carry straight through."

True prodigies are scarcer than a red crow. When we look closely at past performances, we are forced to adjust our contemporary measuring-sticks. Mozart composed minuets before he was 4; Beethoven played in public at 8 and published at 10; Hummel gave concerts at 9; Schubert composed at 11; Chopin performed a concerto at 8; Mendelssohn began to compose systematically at 12; and Richard Strauss wrote a polka and a song at 6.

These children developed into rich creative artists, and were prodigies with whom our present galaxy -- brilliant though it may be -- can hardly be compared.

Data on the child artists presented in this study is drawn primarily from three sources: first, from interviews with parents, teachers, relatives, sponsors, managers, and whenever possible with the prodigies themselves; next, from reviews of debuts and all important local appearances in local newspapers, New York appearances in the New York Times, London appearances in the London Times, European appearances as



reported in the Musical America, general background from articles in magazines listed in the Readers' Guide; and finally, from a check on the bound volumes of Program Clippings, 1900-40, in the Music Department of the San Francisco Public Library; and the Pacific Coast Music Review, 1906-28;1930-31. All persons included have been at one time or another publicly presented as prodigies.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the numerous persons -- prodigies, pedagogues, patrons, parents, and sponsors, among others -- who furnished information and made the compilation possible. For their interest and aid, special thanks must be rendered to Miss Jessica Fredricks, Music Department, San Francisco Public Library; Miss Helene Comte, her assistant; Miss Helen Bruner, Sutro Branch Library; Dr. Albert Elkus; Mr. Alfred Frankenstein; and Mrs. Roy H. Stovel. The principal biographical portion of the study was prepared by Mr. Horatio F. Stoll, Jr., assisted in part by Mr. Charles E. Michaels, Mr. Ralph E. Auf der Heide, Miss Ruth Krasnow, Mr. Serge Kazankin, and Mr. Basil Dee Vaerlen of the History of Music Project.

Cornel Lengyel

San Francisco,  
May, 1940



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Photo: Courtesy of Mrs. Violet Fenster Blagg

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## FIFTY LOCAL PRODIGIES

ARKATOV, James, cellist (b. July 17, 1921, Odessa, USSR).

The Odessa of 1921 was hardly an ideal setting for the birth of an artist. The Soviet and White armies were carrying on the dying struggle of the Revolution, and Odessa's streets were common battlegrounds. James' father, Moscow-born Alexander Arkatov, had been a professor in the Department of Fine Arts in the University of Moscow from which he rose to a professorship of Dramatic Art in the Imperial School of the Theatre of Moscow. At this stage in his career he met and married Tina Wittles, in 1919, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, and a graduate of the University of Georgia, who was continuing her study of music and art on the continent.

After the birth of James, Arkatov resolved to move his family to a more stable environment. Making their way through Europe, they finally landed in New York in 1923 where Arkatov found the time and locale ideal for the utilization of his dramatic talent. His success as stage director reached its climax in a modern dress production of Hamlet, on the strength of which Paramount Studios in Hollywood put him under contract. The family arrived in California in 1925.

James was now four and little different from the average run of children. Because his parents believed in the fundamental importance of music study in the education of a child, he was started on piano. A year later, while still in



kindergarten, he accompanied a chorus of several hundred children. His progress was rapid but hardly remarkable.

It was the removal of the family to San Francisco, in 1929, that changed the course of James' musical interests. As a ninth birthday present, he was taken to a concert of Piatigorsky, the famous cellist. Here the impressionable boy heard a Dvorak concerto which moved him so deeply that after the concert he insisted that he wanted to play -- what he called -- "a big fiddle." Naturally, the father was pleased and the next day he bought for the child a quarter-sized cello. Stanislaus Bem, the gifted teacher, became his instructor. It was soon evident that the cello was the natural medium of expression for James. He made his first public appearance, after but a year's study, during National Music Week, on May 8, 1932, when he captured first prize from a field of 50 contestants.

This put a new light on the whole thing. A change of teachers seemed advisable, and he was brought to the attention of William Dehe, first cellist of the San Francisco Symphony and teacher of Piatigorsky, who accepted him as a pupil. Eventually, in the light of James' talent, this became a standing scholarship. It was in Dehe's studio that a new world opened for the young prodigy. There he met and performed for a host of distinguished guests including Molinari, Piatigorsky, and the late Gabrilowitsch. It was the latter who was so moved by the child's remarkable ability



that he encouraged him in every possible way, even to the extent of being his accompanist in several auditions for the Summer Symphonics of 1933. The concentration on cello did not, however, prohibit James continuing the study of piano with Edward Harris; and time was found to undertake harmony and counterpoint with Julius Gold.

When James became 12, it was necessary to prepare him for presentation to the public. In order to give him experience in playing before large groups, he was presented in a recital on March 6, 1934 in the Colonial Ballroom of the St. Francis Hotel, with Dehe as accompanist. The San Francisco Chronicle's critic commented the next day:

"At the age of 12, James Arkatov has made extraordinary progress towards becoming a first rate cellist. In his recital last night at the St. Francis Hotel, the large audience not only was impressed by his promise, it also enjoyed his actual music.... At first in the Eccles G minor Sonata the tastefulness of some of his use of sliding tone was open to question. Quickly however, his style became more refined. His performances of the mature A minor Concerto of Saint-Saens was both intelligent and capable."

Joining with the Van Den Burg Junior Symphony was the next step in his experience. This ensemble offered performance and study to those intent on becoming symphonic instrumentalists. His ability soon raised him to the position of first cellist, a position which he filled until he left the city. At the same time, he played with the String Orchestra of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

In 1938, in his eighth year of cello playing, the outside world became aware of him. Fritz Reiner heard him



and immediately engaged him to play in the Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra. Thus, at 16, James Arkatov became the youngest professional symphony member in the United States. It was while with this organization that he had the opportunity of playing for the great Feuermann, who extended an invitation to study with him in Zurich, Switzerland, during the summer months.

In 1939, James was back in San Francisco and played at the Golden Gate International Exposition in a series of three concerts given by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. It was then that Pierre Monteux, the orchestra's conductor, auditioned him and satisfactory arrangements were made for including him in the membership of that organization for the 1939-40 season.

Sources:

Interview with Dr. A. Arkatov, January, 1939.

San Francisco Chronicle, March 7, 1934.

San Francisco News, July 2, 1934; January 8, 1935.





BENKMAN, Patricia, pianist (b. February 8, 1918, San Francisco). Parents: Herbert and Gertrude Benkman.

At the age of nine, having never had a single piano lesson, little Patricia Benkman decided to become a pianist. There was no actual opposition from her parents, although her father, a well-known flutist with the San Francisco Symphony, did not favor a public career for his daughter -- he knew all too well the obstacles to be overcome.

The child's progress under the tutelage of Mrs. Ralph Wetmore was rapid. In 1927, after less than a year of study, she made her first public appearance, at the Veterans' Hall and on the same program with Mme. Schumann-Heink, then making a concert tour to celebrate her 50 years of song. That grand old lady predicted a brilliant future for Patricia. In the same year she appeared before the Pacific Coast Musical Society. During the next three years she studied with Lev Shorr. In 1931 she won a two-year scholarship with Gunnar Johansen.

Patricia made her professional debut with the San Francisco Chamber Symphony April 19, 1933, under Gaston Usgli, playing the Grieg Concerto. Alexander Fried, writing in the Examiner of the next day, was sanguine about her future:

"Patricia Benkman made a most remarkable impression as a piano soloist. She revealed an astonishing authority of style and expression. She is musical through and through. She has taste, feeling and a variable sense of dramatic or rhetoric effect. Further growth and study should enlarge the power of her tone and perfect details of her excellent prowess."



Three years later, she repeated this performance when she appeared with the WPA Orchestra under Ernst Bacon. With this group, on May 10, 1936, she played the Grieg Concerto, and Alfred Frankenstein in next morning's Chronicle wrote:

"Of the very young soloist one gathered the impression of great sincerity, intelligent musicianship, and enviable technical command. Some passages, notably the silvery spring freshet of sound at the opening of the slow movement, were enchantingly beautiful."

Her finishing studies were made during a summer scholarship with Harold Bauer at Mills College in 1934, and with Marcel Maas in Washington, D. C., in 1939. She now resides there, and is planning a concert tour through the East for 1940.

Sources:

San Francisco Examiner, April 20, 1933.

San Francisco Chronicle, April 20, 1933; May 11, 1936.



BLAGG, Violet Fenster, pianist, vocalist (b. September 25, 1896, San Francisco). Parents: Theodore and Ethel Fenster.

As accompanist for her brother, Lajos Fenster, and as a concert pianist, Violet (Fenster) Blagg achieved considerable renown as a child prodigy. She was born of a musical family -- her father being a violinist, composer, and orchestra leader; her mother a pianist; and her brother, Lajos, two years her junior, a violin prodigy.

Her earliest training at the keyboard was with her mother and later she studied with George Kruger. On going to Germany with her brother in 1912, she continued piano with Mayer-Mahr and Alberto Jonas of Berlin, and studied voice with Carel Von Hulst and Lorna Lachmond.

Her debut was made at a joint recital with her brother for the Pacific Musical Society at the Novelty Theatre, October 27, 1910. Referring to this occasion, Alfred Metzger wrote in the Pacific Coast Musical Review of November 5, 1910:

"Violet Fenster, too, is a most remarkably gifted child. Her ensemble work revealed an intelligence far beyond her years. She created a sensation with her wonderful interpretation of Liszt's Second Rhapsody and the Staccato Caprice by Vogrich. The audience called her back again and again until she responded with an encore."

Numerous concerts with her brother followed; then came their farewell concert at the Scottish Rite Auditorium on November 27, 1912, before leaving for Europe. In New York soon after the outbreak of the World War, Violet appeared as



soloist and as accompanist for her brother. Returning to San Francisco, she taught piano, and accompanied her brother and Maude Fay, the singer.

In 1919 she was married to Mr. H. W. Blagg. They have two children, Donald and Nancy. When the San Francisco Municipal Chorus was formed in 1924 she became the accompanist, which position she still retains. Her musical activities include accompanying, work in trios and quartets, and singing. At present she lives in San Francisco and is teaching.

Sources:

Interview with Violet Fenster Blagg, February 5, 1940.

Pacific Coast Musical Review, June 18, November 5, 1910.





BLAKE, Beverly, violinist (b. March 11, 1921, San Francisco).

Beverly Blake began to study the violin when she was 5 years old. Mary Pasmore, her teacher, held great hopes for the young girl who showed so much talent. Beverly was presented in her first recital when she was 7, just two years after her studies began. The San Francisco Chronicle of September 11, 1927, stated:

"....Considering the youth of the precocious musician, some of her interpretations were truly astounding....Her tone was quite big for one so young."

In 1928 her studies continued with Louis Persinger, and at the Women's City Club on November 28, 1928, Beverly made her public debut. She followed Persinger to New York, and enrolled in the Institute of Musical Art, the youngest student in the history of the school. Her New York debut was in Steinway Hall on April 5, 1930, and her program included the Nardini E minor Concerto, some movements of Lalo's Spanish Symphony, Saint-Saens' Rondo Capriccioso and others. The conservative New York Times of April 5, 1930, wrote:

"....The very youthful violinist revealed careful preparation and serious intent...she gave an interesting performance of the ambitious program."

Returning to San Francisco, Beverly gave a recital at the Sarah Dix Hamlin School, and resumed her study with Miss Pasmore. After three years of study she gave a recital that included a Bach sonata in G major, and the first movement of the Tschaikowsky Concerto. Alexander Fried in the San Francisco Examiner, said:



"The difficulties of the Bach and the Tschai-kowsky are no mean task -- Miss Blake attacked them with excellent dexterity and control.... Her intelligent handling of the Adagio of the Bach promised serious musicianly development for the future."

In December 1939 Miss Blake was awarded a 3-year scholarship at Mills College, where she now attends.

Sources:

Interview with Miss Mary Pasmore, December 21, 1939.

San Francisco Chronicle, May 1, 1932.

San Francisco Examiner, April 24, 1932.



BRADY, Stewart, vocalist, pianist (b. June 23, 1917, Golconda, Nevada). Parents: George, a sheriff; Margaret, a singer.

When Stewart Brady was 9 months old he began his singing career by imitating his mother. One day when Stewart was only 3 years old his mother fell ill, after having promised to sing at a funeral. The child filled her engagement, singing the "Rose of Sharon" so impressively that many of the mourners commented favorably on his ability.

In 1925 he was brought to San Francisco where his musical studies were directed by Mrs. Catherine B. Swint, who has remained his only teacher until his sailing for Europe in January 1938. His first notable engagement was to sing the child's part in the production of the oratorio Elijah by the Municipal Chorus on May 13, 1925, under the direction of Dr. Hans Leshke. His clear boy soprano was considered by many to be without equal.

He was 10 years old when he made his official debut at the Fairmont Hotel in April 1927. So successful was this appearance that he was engaged to sing in the prologue to The King of Kings at the Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. Following this 15-week engagement, he was re-engaged for the prologue to Noah's Ark.

In January 1938 he sailed to England to study under Dino Borgioli, famed Metropolitan Opera tenor.

Sources:

Interview, Mrs. Catherine B. Swint, January 1940.  
San Francisco News, January 24, 1938.



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A L I C E   F R I S C A   ( M A Y E R )

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Photo: Courtesy of Mrs. Eve Mayer

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BRANDT, Enid Lillian, pianist (b. Decembor 21, 1891, San Francisco; d. April 18, 1916).

A personification of those qualities which the public expects in prodigies and musical geniuses -- fragile, gracile, and gracious, both as a child and young woman -- Enid Brandt won much by her exquisite spirit as well as her facility with the piano.

The child's musical propensity seems to have derived from both her parents. Her father, Noah Brandt, a violinist, conductor, and composer, was educated in Berlin and graduated from Leipzig Conservatory, and for a time first violinist with the London Symphony. Later he came to teach in San Francisco. Mrs. Brandt received most of her musical education from her husband and became a competent musician and teacher.

Signs of Enid's remarkable penchant for music appeared remarkably early, for at the age of one she surprised her parents by singing a melody she had heard. At 14 months, before she could walk, she would clap her hands in glee and sing popular airs of the day. On her second birthday she was given a 1-octave toy piano, upon which she immediately picked out her favorite airs. At 3 years old she would sit at the grand piano and form her own harmonies to many classical airs. One of her mother's prized mementos is a photograph of the baby and Chevalier de Kontski, the composer and pianist, which he insisted should be taken after he heard the child play.



Mrs. Brandt first trained the child by imitation, as the little one had absolute pitch. She could instantly sing any note called for; and concords and discords -- as many as ten notes -- were called out unhesitatingly.

Her debut was made in 1895 at a private charity exhibition and she received much praise for her natural expression and technique in playing Chopin's Minuit Valse in the original edition. Gramophone records were made to record the occasion for posterity.

Already at this tender age she exhibited the strange psychological phenomenon of synesthesia or the confusion of the senses. In her case synesthesia was with color in connection with sound.

It first attracted the attention of Dr. Carl Renz of San Francisco. Later, in New York, Dr. Carter Cole became so interested in her that he sent her to all of the operas at the Metropolitan so that she might obtain for him both their form and color.

Both physicians were writing books on that subject and were delighted with the valuable information she was able to give them. Her mother is in possession of charts in color of the major and minor scales; also the form and colors of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, Chopin, Wagner, César Franck, Mozart, Haydn, and many others. Scriabin, the Russian composer and pianist, died just before he finished his book on this subject; and Miss Brandt had her book in preparation when she, too, passed on.



Enid made her first appearance in three recitals at 8 years of age under the direction of T. H. Friedlander in Steinway Hall in San Francisco. She played 25 compositions in those 3 recitals, including 4 of her own entitled: Impromptu in E minor, March of the Brownies, Little Sunbeam Valse, and Idyl: Chasing the Butterfly. The latter was immensely popular in London and Berlin. An excerpt is quoted from Town Talk of November 10, 1900:

"Of all the child prodigies showered upon us, she is the greatest. She is very uncanny in her mature interpretations of compositions far beyond her years. The child, so tiny, infantile, fragile, is womanly at the piano."

After this appearance she went to New York for a short period merely to introduce her compositions. She played at Carnegie Hall before an enthusiastic audience of 3500, and Tom Berry, New York correspondent for the Chronicle, telegraphed for the edition of May 5, 1901:

"Such remarkable playing by such a small girl impressed her hearers as being nothing short of sensational. The significance of the long continued applause and many encores is evident when it is remembered that the audience was composed of critical music lovers of this city who are steady patrons of Carnegie Hall during the season. She was a tiny figure on the immense stage and the fact was made all the more impressive by the great storm of brilliant melody she drew from the key-board with her baby fingers."

In 1908, at the age of 17, she went to London and Berlin where she continued her lessons under her mother and Dr. William Mason. In London she appeared at two concerts in



Bechostion Hall, and again with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Otto Marienhagen in Beethoven-saal. Sixteen hundred critical music lovers cheered her to the echo; and she received 14 recalls. The Berliner Reichsanzeiger of May 3, 1910, said in part:

"She overcame the tremendous difficulties of the Beethoven Emperor and Tschaikowski concertos with such consummate ease that they were underestimated by the audience."

After remaining in Europe 2 years, Enid returned to San Francisco for further study with her mother. She revisited London with a repertoire of more than 100 solo classics, 12 concertos, and 10 important sonatas. Her performance of Brahms' Sonata in F minor was so successful that an audition was arranged for her with the directors of the London Symphony Orchestra. She was engaged to play in a series in which Paderewski and Hambourg were soloists -- an unusual honor. An excerpt from the London Globe of June 19, 1914, is quoted:

"Facility in lyric passages is a highly valuable asset. Her tone is pure and free from harshness. In the lighter selections of Brahms' F minor Sonata she alternated cleverly between tenderness and vivacity. Great charm in Mendelssohn's Variations Serieuses, the fugato section and the variations in the major key sounding particularly clear and attractive. Later Miss Brandt showed enviable insight into the less absorbing side of Chopin and finished an eminent recital with modern selections."

Amid the cheers and bravos of the audience, and with 15 curtain calls, Enid's career abruptly closed. Just as she was about to fill professional engagements of importance





all over Europe -- war was declared, and she was obliged to return to America. After 5 months in New York, attending the opera, furthering her studies of synesthesia, and studying theory, she returned to San Francisco, physically depleted. She was stricken with influenza-pneumonia, and died in 3 days in her twenty-fifth year.

Enid Brandt made a name for herself as a genuine musical prodigy in her native city, and as a finished artist in foreign capitals. She lived in close communion with herself and was possessed of the idea that she was sent here to accomplish a certain special service to the world. In her brief but useful life she did more than many others of greater years and experience.

Sources:

Interview with Mrs. Noah Brandt, December 1939.

Town Talk, San Francisco, November 10, 1901.

San Francisco Chronicle, May 5, 1901.

Berliner Reichsanzeiger, Berlin, May 3, 1910.

London Globe, June 19, 1913.



CARVER, Catherine, pianist (b. October 27, 1903, Steamboat Springs, Colorado). Parents: William T. and Ette Clark Carver.

Catherine began her musical studies with Mme. Siondia Erkely at the age of 6, and remained with her for six years. Her first public recital was on November 18, 1916, at the Palace Hotel. Redfern Mason wrote in the San Francisco Examiner on the following day:

"She played Beethoven, the little Sonata in G. Those scale passages came out with an aplomb that startled one. This was not imitation; the child was thinking musically after the fashion of Harold Bauer, of Teresa Carreno, of members of the clan of 'those who know.'"

"Madame Erkely says she works through the psychology of affection. I can well believe it and it seems to me that the little Catherine was fortunate to fall into her hands. I hope she will remain as unspoiled and frank as the little Madriguera was."

After two more recitals at the Palace Hotel and an appearance as guest soloist with the orchestra of the California Theatre, she entered the Boston Conservatory, graduating in 1925. On December 11, 1925, she gave a recital in Jordan Hall, Boston, of which the Boston Transcript of next day was somewhat more critical:

"Her technic is large, sometimes surprisingly so, and what is more, decidedly smooth and even. Her tone is of good quality, sings well the song of many a lyric passage. It builds up to sonorous climax without growing hard or coarse."

"She possesses a certain sense of style, though she is not equally successful in all of the styles she attempts. She is at her best in pieces of romantic appeal. The Godowski arrangement of Chopin's A minor Etude was charming in its smoothness and finish throughout."



She was less successful in Beethoven's C minor Sonata, Opus 10. Architectonic qualities in music still somewhat elude her."

Miss Carver's later studies included a course at the Institute of Musical Art under Oliver Denton and Carl Friedberg, from which she graduated with a silver medal and highest honors in 1930; study provided by the Juilliard Scholarship at Baden-Baden, Austria; and the Naumburg Foundation Scholarship award. Her debut was sponsored by the latter organization at Town Hall in 1933.

During the years of 1936-37 she taught at the Knox School in Cooperstown, New York. Following this she entered Boston University, graduating in 1939 with a degree of Bachelor of Music. Miss Carver now teaches at the Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina. In the autumn of 1939, in conjunction with two other pianists, she presented a cycle of the 32 Beethoven sonatas.

Sources:

San Francisco Examiner, November 18, 1916.

San Francisco Daily News, February 26, 1921.

Boston Transcript, Boston, December 12, 1925.



CAVANAUGH, Marion Patricia, pianist (b. July 21, 1912, Alameda, California; d. October 4, 1931). Parents: Frank, a house painter; and Mary Cavanaugh.

Brief, brilliant, and tragic was the career of this youngest of 14 children. Marion exhibited native musical ability at the age of 4, when she made her first public appearance. An advertising stunt placed her in the window of a music store where her playing attracted the attention of Joseph G. Jacobson, a piano teacher. He was so impressed with her ability that he offered her free lessons, and remained her only teacher.

Marion's debut took place at a semi-private recital at the Hotel Oakland in May of 1918 for the benefit of Base Hospital No. 17; on October 12, 1919, she gave a half-hour program at the Greek Theatre, University of California, Berkeley; and in the following year, on May 4, she appeared at the To-Kalon Club as soloist and accompanist for Lin Pagliughi, San Francisco's prodigy coloratura. The Pacific Coast Musical Review of September 17, 1921, records of her in a later concert:

"This gifted youngster is but ten years old and her powers of concentration and her memory have been the wonder of all who have heard her. Nothing seems too difficult for her to memorize or to master technically.

"The child had the opportunity recently of playing for Mischa Lhevinne, the pianist, who was elated over her performance....He went so far as to say that he had heard child wonders all over the world, but that little Marion was far ahead of any child of her years and she need not be afraid to appear before any critic or audience."





Four more times the child was heard. On May 12, 1922, she gave a joint recital with Alexander Murray, prodigy violinist, at the St. Francis Hotel; she was featured by the San Francisco Daily News in a radio program in June of 1922; and she played with Rosebrook and his band at the Oakland Auditorium in 1923 and 1924.

Marion P. Cavanaugh's career was tragically terminated in an automobile accident on October 4, 1931, when she was 19 years old.

Sources:

Interview with Joseph G. Jacobson, January 2, 1940.  
Pacific Coast Musical Review, September 17, 1921.



COWLES, Cecil Marion, pianist (b. 1893, San Francisco). Parents: ~~Hubert~~ and Gertrude Cowles.

As a child wonder of the gay nineties in San Francisco, Cecil Marion Cowles was contemporary with Enid Brandt. Born two years after Enid Brandt, the stories of the two young prodigies run parallel for many years. Both girls came from American families with a musical background; both exhibited precocity at a very early age; both were acclaimed in San Francisco and in the capitals of Europe.

At the age of 3, Cecil Cowles gave evidence of musical talent. Everything that had musical rhythm caught her ear, from the street call and the popular tune of the day to the operatic aria. She would listen attentively, then climb on the piano stool and work industriously until she had added another childish improvisation to her repertoire.

Her first lessons were received from her mother, a teacher of music. When 5 she appeared at a benefit for Mme. Fabri-Muller at the Columbia Theatre. In her eighth year she began piano studies with Hugo Mansfeldt, and made her debut at Steinway Hall, December 3, 1903. The program included Mozart's Fantasia in D minor, Brahms' Intermezzo, Opus 110, No. 1, groups of Chopin and Schumann numbers, and two of her own compositions. Ashton Stevens wrote in the San Francisco Examiner of December 15, 1904, after her second concert:

"Cecil Cowles is the single child wonder of my experience that is cleverer than she herself knows."



The Musical Courier of December 30, 1904, reported:

"Little Cecil Cowles surpasses anything we have ever heard in precocity, artistic conception, tone, technique, and temperament."

Two years later, when the girl was 13, she wrote an opera, The Queen of the Fairies, which never reached production because the earthquake destroyed most of the theatres in the city. Hugo Mansfeldt, who was often praised for the wonderful musical foundation which he imparted to her, declared that only Chopin himself could have succeeded as well for his age as this girl. Chopin became her model in composition and many of his works appeared on her programs.

At a concert in the Century Club on November 22, 1910, the program was composed almost entirely of her own works, including a musical setting for the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. She was the featured guest artist with the Popular Symphony concert given at the Civic Auditorium, May 28, 1916, under the direction of Mr. Minetti. The Pacific Coast Musical Review of June 15, 1916, stated:

"Miss Cecil Cowles played the presto movement from the Saint-Saens Concerto in G minor for piano and orchestra. This work is redolent with brilliant technical passages, and Miss Cowles' graceful and busy fingers ran over the keyboard with a celerity and accuracy that was absolutely astounding. It would be indeed difficult, if not impossible, to imagine technical execution of a more complete nature and a more satisfactory character. Notwithstanding the technical brilliancy of this work, Miss Cowles succeeded in investing it with sufficient emotional phrasing to give it a certain musical importance."

Early in 1917 Cecil Cowles went to New York and was offered an opportunity to play the first and second movements



of the Saint-Saens Concerto before Joseph Stransky at Carnegie Hall. He praised her great power, fluent technique, perfect touch, and splendid tone, stating that she lacked nothing required of a concert pianist, that she needed no more study, and could easily teach. She was engaged by him to play with the Philharmonic Orchestra.

In the years that followed she devoted more and more time to composing, but made occasional concert tours through the East and Middle West. The San Francisco Chronicle of June 17, 1923, reported her activities:

"Cecil Cowles, San Francisco's pianist-composer, is meeting with continued success in the East both as a performer and writer of music. She is busily engaged in writing new works in the intervals of her concert appearances. She was twice heard in Washington, D. C., last month, once in a joint recital with Jules Faulk, distinguished violinist who played some of Cecil's compositions. The other occasion was a recital of her own in which she played her Song Without Words, In a Rickshaw, Chinese Dance and Walse Caprice, a Mozart sonata, three Chopin mazurkas and two Liszt numbers."

In recent years Miss Cowles has been active in the field of composition, particularly in Oriental music. At present (1940), she teaches piano in New York.

#### Sources:

San Francisco Bulletin, November 28, 1903.  
San Francisco Call, November 29, 1903.  
Town Talk, San Francisco, December 12, 1903.  
Musical Courier, New York, December 30, 1904.  
Oakland Enquirer, Oakland, Calif., July 21, 1906.  
San Francisco Examiner, December 15, 1904;  
 February 8, November 23, 1910.  
Pacific Coast Musical Review, June 15, 1916;  
 March 17, 1917; May 14, 1921.  
San Francisco Chronicle, June 17, 1923.





CYKMAN, Harry, violinist (b. August 27, 1922, San Francisco).  
Parents: Joseph and Ita Wittles Cykman.

Harry's parents are Jewish, born and educated in a section of Russia that bordered on Poland -- the father in Pollenpoe, the mother in Shejetowla. Joseph Cykman studied pharmacy in Kiev and in 1905 was married. The family left Russia in 1921 and arrived in San Francisco early in 1922, where Harry, youngest of five children, was born.

At the age of 5, he was attempting to pick out popular melodies on the family piano but had to wait until he was 5 years old before he was permitted to begin study with Sigmund Rader. His progress was so rapid that a year later he won first prize in a musical contest sponsored by the San Francisco News.

On May 20, 1930, he was presented in a debut recital in Scottish Rite Auditorium and the following day, Redfern Mason wrote in the San Francisco Examiner:

"When a little boy of seven plays a Handel Sonata, the G minor Concerto of Max Bruch and the Pugnani-Kreisler Prelude and Allegro, and plays them with technical assuredness, you know you are in the presence of something out of the ordinary....Harry is a husky little fellow, with nothing of the fragile hothouse plant type about him. He is essentially musical. His reading of Am Meer and a Brahms Waltz, written with an undersong, so that the fiddle is playing two parts all the time is proof of that....

"What the future has in store for him it would be idle to prophesy. We do not know. Precocity does not necessarily imply depth. But emotionally Harry is further advanced at seven than Yehudi was at nine. A remarkable child, with rare talent. So much may be said of him without hesitation."



After this recital he received a scholarship with the Curtis Institute and went to study under Efrem Zimbalist.

In 1931, he returned to San Francisco and was presented by Alice Seckols on October 14 in a concert in the Scottish Rite Auditorium. Ada Hanifin of the San Francisco Examiner again drew the inevitable comparison with Menuhin, contradicting Redfern Mason's opinion expressed in his review of the first recital. "When he stepped out on the platform in a white blouse and black breeches," wrote Miss Hanifin, October 15, 1931, "he called to mind a nine year old Yehudi. But Harry hasn't the spiritual insight of Yehudi....Yet (he) plays with a technical fluency that is none the less extraordinary in one so young, as evidenced particularly in the passage work in the second movement of the Beethoven Concerto."

Later in the year he made his first appearance with a large orchestra playing with the Portland Symphony under Willem Van Hoogstraten. He then returned to San Francisco for further studies with his first teacher, Sigmund Rader. On March 11, 1932, at one of the series of Young Peoples' Symphony Concerts, he appeared with the San Francisco Symphony conducted by Basil Cameron at the Tivoli Theatre. He played two movements of the Bruch G minor Concerto. Alexander Fried wrote in the Chronicle, March 12, 1932:

"There seems to be no end of youngsters who are able to stand up in front of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and to give a good account of a man-sized violin concerto....Harry Cykman



....displayed a tone of distinctive possibilities and a quite advanced skill and musical feeling....He promises to become an excellent fiddler."

Cykman remained with Rader until 1934, when he returned to the Curtis Institute. He later studied with Emil Letlin, a former pupil of the famous Carl Flesch.

On June 26, 1937, at the Robin Hood Dell Concerts given by the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra, Cykman and Rafael Drurian played the Bach Concerto in D minor for two violins. This concert, conducted by Saul Caston, was broadcast over a nation-wide hook-up.

Cykman joined the master violin class of Jean Galamian, in 1938, with whom he is now studying.

Cykman is a third cousin of the famous composer, Anton Rubinstein.

Sources:

Interview with Joseph Cykman, March, 1939.

San Francisco Examiner, May 21, 1930; October 14, 1931.

San Francisco Chronicle, March 12, 1932.

Musical America, July, 1937.



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M A R I L Y N   D O T Y

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Photo: Courtesy of Dr. Gerald Doty

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DOTY, Marilyn, violinist (b. May 1, 1923, San Francisco).  
Parents: Dr. Gerald and Ruth Aitken Doty.

Marilyn alone among San Francisco's musical prodigies has a long American ancestry: she is a direct descendant of Edward Doty who came to this country in 1624 on the fabulous Mayflower. One of her great-grandparents was a well-known musician of gold rush days and on both sides of her family she is descended from old San Francisco pioneers.

Neither of her parents were poor and struggling nor frustrated artists; and although fond of music, neither possessed exceptional musical talent. When Marilyn began demanding violin lessons at the age of 2, they were not prepared to consider the demands seriously. She was almost 6 years old before she began to study violin with Sigmund Anker. Immediately she gave evidence of unusual gifts -- a remarkable musical memory and a natural facility in bowing and fingering.

After a few months' study she was presented in public, playing the "Barcarolle" from The Tales of Hoffmann and variations on a patriotic air, on the occasion of the annual spring recital of Sigmund Anker pupils held in the Fairmont Hotel. The cherubic Marilyn created a small sensation.

She was then placed with Nathan Abas and remained with him until 1932. When 8 years old, she gave a full program at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music which included the Max Bruch A minor Concerto for Violin and Piano and De Beriot's Fin de Ballet.



Kathleen Parlow became her next teacher. Carol Weston, at that time Parlow's assistant, devoted much time to Marilyn. On January 16, 1934, at the age of 11, she made her professional debut at the San Francisco Women's Club. With the San Francisco Sinfonietta, a chamber ensemble of 20 of the best local instrumentalists conducted by Giulio Minetti, she played the Max Bruch G minor Concerto.

In the San Francisco Examiner of January 17, 1934, Redfern Mason rhapsodized:

"Perhaps the older generation had better get off the earth and give the youngsters a chance. They could not manage affairs worse than we have done, and by being simple and truthful and energetic they might do better.

"This thought must have come into the minds of many last night when little Marilyn Doty, eleven years old, blonde and sweet, played the Max Bruch G minor Concerto with the Sinfonietta and won the hearts of both orchestra and audience.

"Kathleen Parlow is the child's teacher and each ought to be proud of the other. Marilyn is embodied rhythm; her intonation is good, and her tone warm, sympathetic, and, for one so young, strong.

"....Marilyn is simple, earnest and the music seems to pulsate through her. Much is the result of careful training, no doubt; but much, too, is manifestly personal expression. Marilyn must be added to the list of San Francisco's remarkable young musicians."

Alexander Fried wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle the same day:

"Her technique is versatile and agile...without a doubt Marilyn feels music in a deep way of her own. In the slow movement, the exalted tone of Bruch's melody often sang under her bow..."



Following her debut she went to Europe, making her first European appearance in Copenhagen on February 6, 1935. She followed this with successful concerts in all the Scandinavian countries and the Nordic critics found her music and blondness of equal appeal, searching the critics' vocabulary for adequate metaphors. "Destiny has again come over us, and we must recognize it," said the critic of Copenhagen's Politiken. "...one must report competently and carefully both with regard to the girl and the violin....a child's serious face, framed in beautiful long golden curls -- pure nature. And then the violin: the same as the curls -- pure nature."

Tidens Tegn of Oslo, Norway, commented: "It was positively fantastic what she did on her little violin." So it must have seemed to most of her audiences when she was a child for there was nothing about her of the usual prodigy -- nothing of that eerie old-soul-in-a-child's body look. The Copenhagen critic was delighted to report that after she had swept through Dvorak's Slavonic Dances, "con passione," her first action after leaving the stage was to throw down violin and floral tributes and attack a big box of chocolates -- "con passione."

A highlight of this Scandinavian conquest was a performance in Oslo, before King Haakon and Queen Maud, March 26, 1935.

In London she played at a party attended by the fashionable Anglo-American set which included the future Duchess of Windsor, then Mrs. Ernest Simpson.



Before she went to Europe, Michel Piastro, concert-master of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, heard her play and had offered her a scholarship; on her return in 1937, she studied with him, later doing some special work with David Mannes, head of the noted Mannes School. During this period she played for Georges Enesco who said of her: "She is a violin player out of a thousand -- she is one of the most talented children I have ever heard."

The year 1938 was marked by an appearance with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and a "command" performance -- for on April 19, she played at the White House at the request of the President and his wife. An autographed photograph of the Roosevelts was her reward.

In 1939 she returned to San Francisco and resumed study with Carol Weston. The College of Notre Dame at Belmont, California, had just established a 4-year college course in music, and through the efforts of Miss Weston, Marilyn was given a full scholarship. While acquiring a thorough theoretical training, Marilyn will continue to give concerts.

Sources:

Interviews with Mrs. Ruth Doty and Carol Weston.

San Francisco Chronicle, January 17, 1934.

San Francisco Examiner, January 17, 1934.

Undated clippings from Marilyn Doty's press book.





DUBMAN, Laura, pianist (b. 1924, San Francisco).

Of Russian parentage, Laura inherited the musical gifts of her mother, Madame Sonia Dubman. At 4 years old, Laura began piano study, and within a few months it was evident to at least one critical eye that of all Madame Dubman's students it was her daughter who showed the most promise. Among the 500 who attended a pupils' recital in the YMCA Auditorium on June 8, 1928, was Alfred Metzger, editor and publisher of the Pacific Coast Musical Review. In his issue of June 20, singling out Laura for particular notice, he wrote:

"Madame Dubman's little four-year old daughter created a genuine hit....The youngster is not only well taught but, for one of her age, shows a remarkable talent for the pianoforte."

Although confident of her ability to lay a good foundation, Madame Dubman realized the need of greater pedagogical skill to match her child's unusual talents. Laura was brought to Lev Shorr who was immediately interested and accepted her as a pupil. During the next three years he gave her special attention, at various times bringing her to the notice of Josef Hofmann, Lhevinne, and Antonia Brico, all of whom predicted a brilliant future for the child.

Among Mr. Shorr's pupils at this time was Hephzibah Menuhin and through her Laura became a friend and playmate of Yehudi and his sisters.

Meanwhile Laura had made her bow to the general public during Music Week on the International Night program,



May 5, 1930. The following day, Redfern Mason, music critic of the San Francisco Examiner, wrote:

"...a five-year-old pianist, Laura Dubman... must be included in San Francisco's increasing group of precocious musicians. Laura played Daquin's Coucou, something of Grieg and a Chopin Waltz and played them all with an aplomb and assurance that made music lovers gasp."

During 1930 this assured infant mastered 35 program numbers and made several appearances with radio station KGO. On November 18, 1930, less than two years after her first piano lesson, Laura made her concert debut in the Scottish Rite Auditorium, presented by Lev Shorr, managed by Alice Seckels, and sponsored by most of the influential musical patrons of San Francisco. The object of this full-dress professional debut was not to exploit the child but to provide badly needed funds for her future education. The concert -- which included the English Suite of Bach, two Scarlatti sonatas, and a Chopin group -- was successful in its object and in the words of Alexander Fried, writing in the San Francisco Chronicle of November 19, 1930, "was heard with enthusiastic interest by an unusually large audience." He concluded "... she is exceptionally apt in her chosen field of music." On the same date Marjory Fisher in the San Francisco News was a little more specific in her praise:

"Laura demonstrated precocity in both technical accomplishments and general musical intelligence. Seriousness of purpose and remarkable concentration, a sound sense of rhythm and a very definite adherence to the specific musical pattern were at all times in evidence. There



was revealed a surprising depth of tone and insight. To be able to play a program such as Laura did at six is a remarkable feat."

After a year and a half of further study, she evidenced a growing talent for improvisation as well as for the interpretation of classic composers. On April 25, 1932, she was again presented publicly at the Community Playhouse. Alexander Fried noted on this occasion that she was still "so tiny that a basket of flowers given to her in tribute to her gifts towered over her like a small tree." He also observed in his review in the San Francisco Chronicle of April 26, 1932, that in her playing of Bach's Italian Concerto and a sonata by Galuppi "she showed a variable sense of tone and a promising skill."

With the aid of local patrons of music, Laura and her mother went to New York and for the next four years Olga Samaroff was her principal teacher. Some special studies with Josef Lhevinne and Sascha Gorodnitzki were undertaken before her New York debut in the Town Hall, October 9, 1936. "Mistress Dubman has been excellently taught," wrote the New York Post critic next day, "but last night there were no pedagogic ghosts at her side directing her fingers. What she had to say sprang largely from within herself."

The New York press was unanimously favorable but the debut was not in any way sensational. Laura's next appearance evoked a warmer praise. Appearing with Antonia Brico's New York Women's Symphony, she played the second piano concerto



of Beethoven on December 1, 1936. The comment in the December 10 issue of Musical America mirrored that of the New York papers:

"Miss Dubman's playing...was the feature of the evening. Sensitive musicality and the ability to mold a plastic line and shape a phrase and to secure a nicety of gradation in tone are assets which should carry her far....She was roundly applauded and shared appreciation with Miss Brico."

The following April, Laura returned to San Francisco to be the guest artist on the first of the Young People's Symphony Concerts directed by Ernest Schelling and her playing of the first movement of Mozart's A major Concerto provided ample evidence that her early promise was being fulfilled. A few weeks later, on April 14, 1937, she filled the Veterans' Auditorium, presenting a well-rounded and mature recital program. Alfred Frankenstein, noted for his antipathy toward pseudo-prodiges, testified to Laura's artistic claims as follows:

"Plenty of children play the piano or the violin in public concerts, as we who live in San Francisco have ample reason to know, but the genuine child prodigies are infinitely rarer than days in June. A genuine child prodigy gave a recital in Veterans' Auditorium last night. Her name is Laura Dubman. Even though she is only 12 years of age, her name is known here. In future years it is going to be better and better known."

"The high point of the recital...was the Beethoven sonata in D minor..."

"Here little Miss Dubman's playing had that solidity and penetration which makes one forget the player because of one's complete absorption





in the music. This, in the chatter of musical criticism, is called 'authority.' It means that what one has heard has been completely communicated, that no technical or musical insecurity has come between the artist and the composer's thought."

After this triumphant home-coming, Laura returned to New York and in October 1937 sailed for Paris to study for two years with Marcel Ciampi, who taught Hephzibah Menuhin.

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, June 20, 1928.  
San Francisco Examiner, May 6, 1930; November 2, 1930; October 10, 1937.  
Musical West, November, 1930.  
San Francisco Chronicle, November 19, 1930; April 26, 1932; April 15, 1937.  
San Francisco News, November 19, 1930.  
New York Post, October 10, 1936.  
Musical America, December 10, 1936.



EDWARDS, Marjorie, violinist (b. 1922, San Jose, California).

Marjorie's father was an automobile salesman and her mother a piano teacher. Though not poor, the family lived in modest circumstances. Occasionally Mrs. Edwards gave lessons to the grocer's children and accepted food in payment. As is often the case with prodigies, Marjorie's first lessons were not on the instrument which was to be her natural medium. She was a good but not exceptional piano pupil. Given a violin, her real talent became apparent immediately. She was entered in the National Music Week contest when 8 years old and in a large field won her way to the top of her age class. Marjory Fisher of the San Francisco News, reviewing the final tests, held in the San Francisco Civic Auditorium, May 10, 1930, wrote:

"The outstanding talent among the juvenile groups seemed to be that of Marjorie Edwards of San Jose who played with a remarkable sense of style, a good tone, and technique more accurate than one usually encounters in a class of 10-year-old youngsters."

Her progress was sufficiently unusual to induce her mother to make the 60-mile trip to San Francisco several times weekly so that Marjorie might study with Kathleen Parlow and Carol Weston. In Salinas, May 1933, she played the Mendelssohn Concerto in E minor with the semi-professional Monterey Peninsula Orchestra and on March 23, 1934, gave a concert in San Jose.

In August, 1934, Marjorie played in Miss Parlow's studio for George A. Work, a music-loving San Francisco



lawyer. Her instrument was a borrowed one, made by Antonio Pedrinelli, in Crespano in 1853, and valued at \$1500. Mr. Work was so impressed with the young violinist's talent that he arranged a concert in the Forest Hills Community House and invited 100 friends and local music lovers. As a result, funds were subscribed to purchase the borrowed Pedrinelli violin for Marjorie.

She made her formal debut on December 6, 1934 in the Veterans' Memorial Auditorium in San Francisco. In the leaflet publicizing this concert Kathleen Parlow is quoted as saying:

"Marjorie is, in my opinion, a remarkably gifted child, I would even use that much abused word 'genius' in regard to her. Her progress in the fourteen months she has studied with me has been phenomenal and unless all the signs fail, I expect her to be one of the world's greatest violinists. It should be clearly understood, this is no child prodigy being exploited but a serious young artist being helped on a long and arduous road of art."

Marjory Fisher of the San Francisco News was the only local newspaper critic who gave an account of this occasion. Her just and discerning review stated:

"Marjorie immediately made it evident that she has an exquisite talent of the artist type rather than the virtuosic brilliance of the usual child prodigy....

"Marjorie's gifts are essentially lyric. The honeyed phrases of Andante and Adagio movements are her forte. Her technique is adequate....

"At (her) present stage of development she might be called a balladist."



An Eastern appearance was the next logical step but was delayed by a lack of funds. In the summer of 1935, however, Miss Parlow arranged for her pupil's appearance before the important audiences attending the Berkshire Symphony Festival. To get there, Marjorie, her mother, and her brother Carl drove across the continent in the family car. On August 9 -- an interval day in the festival -- Marjorie gave a recital which included Handel's Sonata No. 6 in E, the Tschaiowsky Concerto and a group of shorter compositions by Schubert-Wilhelmj, Manón, Franz Ries, and Sarasate. A New York Times report of August 10, 1935 described her talents as "promising" and the audience as "very enthusiastic."

Playing an almost identical program, Marjorie faced the severer test of a formal New York debut in a Town Hall recital, February 23, 1936. Her unusually attractive personality again roused her audience to enthusiasm, but the critics after noting her lyrical handling of the broad, slow movements, commented somewhat caustically on the discrepancy between her program's demands for technical virtuosity and her technical abilities.

The New York Times' review of February 24, 1936 commented:

"The young violinist made it clear from the beginning that she has a talent for the instrument....The Largo of the Handel Sonata in E was set forth with convincing feeling and the broad opening subject of the Tschaiowsky concerto had fullness and roundness....But Miss Edwards





is not yet ready for public appearance in other respects....While there were moments in the cadenza that indicated that the girl had something of the virtuoso gift, the knotty problems of the work were too much for her, increasing her nervousness."

A review in Musical America, March 10, made similar comments adding that a "few years more of playing experience should carry Miss Edwards to an important position in the concert field."

This experience Marjorie gained in a coast-to-coast tour of 30 concerts through 1938. Meanwhile she has continued her study in the East with Kathleen Parlow. Rather than a sudden spurt of precocious technical development, Marjorie's career seems destined to exhibit the slow maturing of a rounded, sensitive, and individual musical personality whose depth of interpretation will more than compensate for a lack of fireworks.

Sources:

San Francisco News, May 12, 1930; May 7, 1934.  
New York Times, August 10, 1935; February 24, 1936.  
Musical America, March 10, 1936.  
Time, March 2, 1936.



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RUGGIERO RICCI

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Photo: Courtesy of Miss Jessica Fredericks

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FENSTER, Lajos, violinist, violist (b. December 28, 1898, San Francisco; d. April 29, 1937).

That young Lajos should show musical talent seems natural, for his father, Theodore Fenster, was a composer and orchestra leader; had been a pupil of Carl Hubay (father of Janö Hubay) the famous violin teacher and composer; and held the position of violinist with Rosner's famous orchestra. Lajos' musical talent was soon recognized by the observant father, and because of the child's frail physical condition, he was taught at home. In all, he had but two years of academic education.

Not only in musical matters was he exceptional: his whole childhood appears to have been unusual. When about 8 years old he chanced upon a copy of one of Bernard Shaw's then-radical works, and devoured it as a single reading. His omniverous mind then tackled Ibsen, Tolstoi, Shelley, Byron, Dickens, Scott, and Shakespeare -- heavy fare for even the average matured mind. Parallel with this reading course, young Lajos received violin instruction from his father.

He was hailed as a prodigy when he was 10 years old, at which time he possessed a repertoire of which any mature artist could justly be proud. He had thoroughly mastered the Bach Double Concerto in D minor -- the piano part being performed by his sister Violet, two years his senior. She always accompanied him in his concert programs. Looking over the list of performed works one is astonished at the variety



and stability. To mention only a few of the larger works, there was the Beethoven Concerto, De Beriot's A minor Concerto, Violetti's G major Concerto, seven of the Beethoven violin sonatas, including the well-known Kreutzer, and Miska Hauser's Hungarian Rhapsody.

His personality and greatness prompted Metzger to write in the Pacific Coast Musical Review of November 5, 1910:

"It is our firm conviction that young Fenster is a genius of the rarest faculties and if properly nursed will certainly set the world agape with astonishment as it has done last week in the case of the Pacific Musical Society. Temperament and fire are the essentials of real genius and these two qualifications Lajos Fenster possesses to a remarkable degree."

The youthful student practiced six or seven hours a day. His parents, ambitious for his future development, sent him to the Royal High School of Music in Berlin, known for its difficult entrance requirements. Out of 39 applicants, Lajos Fenster was one of two who received scholarships. He had violin lessons under Willi Hess, who had returned to Berlin after having been concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra for many years. When the World War broke out Lajos was forced to return to America.

Back in San Francisco, Fenster studied harmony under Julius Gold and John Patterson. When forced to earn his living, he began to teach. It was a struggle to decide which of the two instruments, violin or viola, was to be his forte, but finally he decided definitely upon the violin. When 15





years old he became second violinist of the Sinsheimer String Quartet which gave concerts in nearby cities; played the violin with the San Francisco String Quartet; and went on concert tours with his sister Violet. With Misha Wilman he played in quartets for the San Francisco Chamber Music Society.

He became the youngest member of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra at the age of 17, and rose rapidly to the position of solo violinist of that organization. Later he became assistant to Michel Piastro then concertmaster of the Symphony. As a member of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra he played under such famous conductors as Hertz, Cameron, Dobrowen, and Molinari.

Mr. Fenster was twice married. His second wife, Elizabeth McCoy Fenster and two children, Betty and Fritz, survive him.

He was studious, cultured, and an able conversationalist. Marshall Maslin in his column "Throb of the City" in the San Francisco Call-Bulletin for May 3, 1937, wrote:

"I never knew Lajos Fenster, our symphony violinist who died the other day and took his precious gift away from us--but I saw him many a time when the orchestra played, and always with a lift of interest. One could not miss seeing his handsome head and the proud tilt of his chin. I thought him arrogant until I happened to sit in front of him at Yehudi's first concert. It was a stern test for any mature musician, who must have dreamed when younger of winning such laurels as fell so early on Menuhin's young brow. But Lajos Fenster met it generously. I heard him praise the boy lavishly, and during an intermission I saw him hold his hands as though he were playing a violin, move



the fingers of his left hand and murmur, 'how does he do that?' ....He had as well the precious gift of humor. A friend says he could lift an eyebrow and send a crowd into peals of laughter."

Fenster's brilliant career ended abruptly when he was stricken with a nervous breakdown which led to his death in 1937, and took from San Francisco one of its most distinguished musicians. Alexander Fried in writing of his passing in the San Francisco Examiner of May 1, 1937, said:

"Much in the world of music is said of conspicuous soloists and conductors. Too little is spoken of first rate ensemble musicians. The ensemble musician must have devoted his life to his instrument. He works often under difficult conditions, involving untold nervous, mental and physical strain. He must be gifted, experienced, adaptable. Such a musician--and a highly accomplished solist as well--was Lajos Fenster. Conductors with whom he worked paid him extraordinary compliments. His scholarship was greater than the public knew."

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, November 5, 1910; October 3, 1924.

Berkeley Gazette, Berkeley, Calif., September 14, 1912.

San Francisco Call, September 15, 1912.

Evening Post, San Francisco, November 28, 1912.

San Francisco Examiner, November 28, 1912; May 1, 1937.

San Francisco Call-Bulletin, May 3, 1937.

San Francisco News, May 3, 1937.



FILIPPO, Libero, violinist (b. February 8, 1917, San Francisco). Parents: Frank and Rose Filippo.

One of the youngest of San Francisco's prodigies, Libero Filippo has not found any royal road to success. His father, a day laborer, was unable to provide the boy with expensive lessons. The Italian colony, however, interested itself in the boy and aided materially. At 14 he had already starved for his art and tramped the streets of New York with his precious violin under his arm, searching for someone to help him on his long climb to recognition.

Young Libero was only 5 when he was hailed as a genius. His musical studies began with Guiseppe Jollain, continuing with Sigmund Anker with whom he remained a number of years. His public debut was made at the Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco, January 31, 1930, at the age of 12. His rendition of selections from Mozart, Paganini, Vieuxtemps, and Kreisler was praised by critics and music lovers alike. Proceeds from the concert were devoted to the purchase of a violin.

Shortly afterwards he went to New York and resumed his studies with Louis Persinger, teacher of Ruggiero Ricci, and formerly concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. While attending school he gave a few concerts which brought him acclaim, though little money.

In 1932, out of 15,000 young people who participated in New York's Music Week celebration, Libero won the



gold medal as the city's most promising musician. It was a pretty medal, but it did not increase the little store of money he possessed. The boy's mother, injured in a streetcar accident, was forced to return to San Francisco, leaving the 16-year-old boy on his own. His fortunes, good and bad, were told by his mother, quoting the San Francisco Chronicle of September 29, 1933:

"I wept many tears for him, my baby," said Mrs. Filippo who was seriously injured in a streetcar accident recently. "I lay in the hospital and could not help him. I knew he walked 60, maybe 70 blocks a day looking for a chance, but there was none. Then Libero met Antonia Erico, the great woman conductor. She saw in him the great thing that was there. She took him into her home. Then last month she brought him home to me."

Antonia Erico, the Berkeley woman-conductor who had been directing a series of symphony concerts at White Plains, New York, in the summer of 1933, became the patroness of Libero, and featured him as guest artist at one of her concerts. After his return, Marjory Fisher in the San Francisco News of October 2, 1933, wrote:

"The San Francisco boy's talents, while promising, are very immature and his program set a task far beyond his present capabilities. Antonia Erico accompanied him."

On March 9, 1935, he gave a concert at the Fairmont Hotel, playing Alessandro Baccaris' Night in Italy; and on March 23 he appeared at the Veterans' Auditorium, playing a Bach concerto, a Tartini sonata, and Vicuxtemps' Fantasia Appassionata.





December of 1935 found him, now a young man of 18, sharing plaudits with tenor Beniamino Gigli in a joint benefit concert at the Academy of St. Cecilia in Rome. He studied thereafter with Remy Principi, well-known instructor in Rome. Bernardino Molinari, conductor of the Augusteo at Milan, praised the young artist for his notable display of artistry and excellent technique.

While still an unproven artist, because of his youth and inexperience, the future seems promising for the young Italian boy from San Francisco. Among the authorities who commented on him, Olin Downes said: "Libero is a great talent." Leopold Stokowski: "Libero plays marvelously." Gabrilowitsch: "Without doubt he will be a great violinist," Molinari: "He will doubtless be a virtuoso in the near future."

Sources:

Interview with Sigmund Anker.

San Francisco Examiner, December 22, 1929.

San Francisco Chronicle, September 29, 1933;

March 3, March 29, 1935.

San Francisco Call-Bulletin, March 16, December

21, 1935.



FLEISHER, Leon, pianist (b. July 23, 1929, San Francisco).  
Parents: Isadore and Bertha (Mittleman) Fleisher.

Leon's Polish mother, a singer, was delighted when her child showed great interest in music at the age of 2. Leon began begging for a piano when he was 6, promising that if the family bought one he would surprise them within a year. He did, for after a year's study with Lev Shorr, Leon had considerable facility and a repertoire of 40 pieces. This slender equipment was considered sufficient reason for presenting him in a professional debut. San Francisco's music critics thought otherwise. Alfred Frankenstein of the San Francisco Chronicle wrote on April 10, 1936:

"The child prodigy season is upon us. It opened last night with a recital at the Community Playhouse given by Leon Fleisher, a 7-year-old pianist, who proved to be an unusually attractive child endowed with the customary unusual gifts. He sat at the keyboard for well over an hour and in a series of works by Bach, Haydn, Chopin and others succeeded in remembering nearly everything his teachers had impressed upon him.

"It was a naive childish performance lifted out of the ordinary run of such things by the boy's delightful manner and by a most respectable technical facility."

Marjory Fisher wrote in the San Francisco News of the same date:

"...He seemed to have a natural liking for what he was doing and is obviously a gifted and conscientious student but why he should make a debut as a recitalist so many years before he is ready to face the world as a musician, or even as a pianist, is a mystery to candid observers."

Following this appearance, Leon became the pupil of Gunnar Johansen and in 1938 of Ludwig Altman. Under their



expert care his undeniable talents rapidly unfolded. His musical gifts and his charming personality, coupled with unusual physical beauty, brought him to the attention of Alfred Hertz. In the Hertz home Leon played for Artur Schnabel who was visiting San Francisco on a concert tour. Proof positive of Leon's promise was immediately given. The great German virtuoso who never accepts pupils under 16 years of age, invited the 9-year-old boy to study with him and said he would accept no fee. An important San Francisco industrialist who desires to be anonymous made it financially possible for Leon and his mother to stay at Lake Como, Italy, where Schnabel has his summer home. By this time Leon's first public appearance had been so far forgotten that it was possible for the San Francisco Chronicle of May 19, 1938, reporting Schnabel's offer, to state that "To date there has been no exploitation of this newest of San Francisco's wonder children."

Before Leon sailed for Europe, Fortune added one more gift in the form of a very successful appearance with the Federal Symphony in the Veterans' Auditorium on May 4, 1938. In the San Francisco Examiner the next day Alexander Fried commented:

"No wonder the eminent Artur Schnabel has invited the boy abroad to study with him beginning within a few weeks as a scholarship pupil.

"Under the baton of Leslie Hodge, Leon played the sprightly Rondo of Beethoven's Second Concerto. As an encore he performed a warmly romantic Liszt Sonnet of Petrarch.



"The lad is sure and dextrous in his keyboard work. Besides he has a bold colorful temperament. His touch is sometimes harsh. But he has so live a talent that he should easily be led to correct this fault."

Sources:

San Francisco News, March 30, 1936; April 5, 1936;

April 10, 1936.

San Francisco Chronicle, April 10, 1936; May 19, 1938.

San Francisco Examiner, May 4, 1938.





GOLUBOFF, Grisha, violinist (b. May 4, 1922, San Francisco).

Max Goluboff, Grisha's father, was born in Kursk in the Russian Ukraine. His early interest in music received little sympathy from the family. When a relative came to stay with the family, in Max's fifth year, he brought along his violin with which he entertained in the evenings. Max was fascinated by the instrument, and secretly practiced on it until caught by his father. A sound thrashing helped to remove from his mind any thoughts of pursuing music. He was impressed with the necessity of forgetting music and tending strictly to school studies so that he might fit into the family business.

Max's family shared the fortunes of so many Jewish groups. Pogroms tore it apart, and 10 years after the violin episode, Max fled to America and settled in St. Louis. There he apprenticed himself to a jeweler, and though the work was uncongenial, he struggled on still fostering the desire for a musical career. Nightly he practiced on the violin. A nervous breakdown resulted, and on the advice of a doctor, he gave up all thoughts of becoming a musician. It was necessary to make a break with the past -- filled as it was with the heart-rending memories of futile hopes -- and Max changed his name to Holcombe and concentrated on the jeweler's profession.

In 1917 he married Ann Niehaus. They moved to San Francisco in 1919, where, three years later, Grisha was born. Despite brave efforts on Max's part, his old urge to music was



not killed out. In this small bit of himself he saw the chance to have a vicarious career -- in his son he would become the artist he had always longed to be. He bought a one-eighth size violin for the child and taught him the positions, bowing, fingering, and the usual elementary exercises. Grisha's response was more than he had hoped for.

At 5 years of age, Grisha was accepted as a pupil by Michel Piastro; and within a year he had developed sufficiently to awaken the interest of Templeton Crocker who offered to subsidize the child until he could support himself as a concert virtuoso.

On March 14, 1930, at the age of 7, Grisha made his first public appearance at a Young People's Symphony concert, playing the first movement of the Mendelssohn Concerto. In the San Francisco Examiner, March 15, 1930, Redfern Mason said:

"His is a real talent and provokes the wonder whether our duo of violin prodigies, Yehudi and Ruggiero, may not become a trio, with Grisha for the third. The lad's technique is startling; but even more important is his tone, which has in it something of that honeyed singing quality that has won admiration for his teacher, Michel Piastro, who by the way, conducted the Mendelssohn."

A month later at an Easter Sunday concert by the Los Angeles Symphony under Arthur Rodzinsky, Grisha performed the Mendelssohn Concerto with sensational success. Six months later he made his debut on the regular schedule of the San Francisco Symphony, playing on January 1 and 3, 1931 the Max Bruch Concerto in G minor for Violin and Orchestra.



After further study in San Francisco the 9-year-old prodigy made his first New York appearance on November 24, 1931 in Carnegie Hall, playing the Mendelssohn Concerto with 100 young musicians of the National Orchestral Association conducted by Leon Barzin. According to the New York Times' account on the following day: "A larger audience than usual manifested extraordinary delight in the child's competent playing..."

Following this concert, Grisha and his family went to France where he studied under Jacques Thibaud. During 1932 he made appearances in Germany, Holland, Scotland, England, and France.

An American tour followed and he then continued his studies under Louis Persinger. In 1933, a second European tour was made and during the summer he studied with Bronislaw Hubermann in Italy. In 1934, the prodigy was back in America and this period of his career was highlighted by his appearance as soloist on the Ford radio hour, playing the second movement of Tschaikowsky's Concerto with the Detroit Symphony under Victor Kolar. Shortly before this, on November 2, he had given his first recital in New York in the Town Hall, "...attempting a program of rather exigent nature, beginning with the Brahms D minor Sonata," according to Musical America, November 10, which added: "This was not without considerable artistry and technical ability but lacked somewhat in depth. The inclusion of the Bach Chaconne might be open to question



but the young player made a brave assault upon its extreme difficulties."

Another European and American tour followed in 1935 on which Grisha was still accompanied by his parents; but in 1936, Mr. and Mrs. Goluboff returned to San Francisco where Grisha's father bought a jewelery business and the boy continued his career under the direction of I. M. Nobel, his business manager.

A notable feature of his 1936 European tour was an appearance on November 8, in the Royal Opera Covent Garden Sunday concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The London Times of November 9, 1936 stated:

"Grisha Goluboff, a violinist still in his early teens made his first appearance here in Mozart's Concerto in G. A better choice for his debut could not have been made; for this music has the freshness and sensitiveness of youth, without going too deep into the mystery of things. To Master Goluboff's performance, we cannot do better than apply Mozart's words about his own: 'It went like oil and everyone praised the beautiful pure tone.' There is need to add volume to the beauty and purity; for the tone was too small for the big theatre. But if his playing was too studied, it was obvious that the boy has been well taught and allowance must be made for a natural nervousness which affected his first solo, under the daunting conditions of a first appearance."

In 1937 Grisha came back to America. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios signed him to appear in a picture dramatizing the life of Jascha Heifetz in which he was to play the youthful Heifetz but these plans were cancelled. While in Hollywood, Grisha studied the theory of music with John Crown.





In 1938, the 14-year-old prodigy, after seven years absence returned to his native city. On February 25-26 he appeared with the San Francisco Symphony under Pierre Monteux playing the Tchaikowsky Concerto.

Of his performance, Frankenstein wrote in the Chronicle, (February 26)

"...he showed that he has a very beautiful tone, some technical brilliance, and a good deal of musical feeling. But his rhythm and his intonation were extremely erratic, and the technical hurdles of the concerto gave him more than one bad moment. It was, on the whole, not the kind of performance one expects of a soloist with a major orchestra."

After this appearance, Grisha lived in a beach cottage near Los Angeles for a period of concentrated study and practice. In June he set off for a tour of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.

In 1939 he returned to Los Angeles for further study.

#### Sources:

Interviews with parents, March 1939.

San Francisco Examiner, March 15, 1930.

Musical America, March 10, 1934.

London Times, November 9, 1936.

San Francisco Chronicle, February 26, 1938.



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Photo: Courtesy of L'Italia

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GORDON, Marcus, pianist (b. April 16, 1909, Oakland, Calif.).  
Parents: Michael and Esther Gordon.

Far from being a delicate aesthete nurtured solely to delight the ears with sound, Marcus Gordon is a robust young man who takes keen delight in sports as well as piano playing, and in particular is a fine tennis player. The two have worked together, for the grip of a tennis racket has strengthened his hands to make possible the firm, resonant tones so characteristic of his expression.

He began his studies with Miss Pauline Newman when he was 7 years old, and continued from 9 to 15 with Miss Ada Clement, and from 16 to 21 with the famous Josef Lhevinne. He had already played several informal recitals in 1919, but it was not until 1924 that he came to the attention of Josef Lhevinne who was conducting a master course in San Francisco. Lhevinne invited him to come to New York on a scholarship at the Juilliard Foundation. Six months later, after graduating from high school, he went to New York.

Before leaving for the East, Marcus Gordon gave a concert March 21, 1925, at the Conservatory of Music, playing Beethoven's Sonata, Opus 57 (Appassionata), the Bach-Tausig Tocatta and Fugue in D minor, and several Chopin and Debussy numbers.

In New York he received five consecutive awards and studied five years with Josef Lhevinne at the Juilliard Foundation. In 1925 he received a medal for winning the Junior Tennis Championship of New York.



Upon his return to San Francisco, a recital to exhibit his growth was given at Scottish Rite Auditorium on September 4, 1929. Marjory Fisher wrote in the San Francisco News, of September 7:

"His performance met with the hearty approval of those present and while his art is as yet immature, the name of Marcus Gordon must be added to the roster of young and gifted artists who call San Francisco home. Gordon has artistic assets of high order. His technique is brilliant and facile. His tone is one of tremendous power, yet it never becomes hard and he successfully subdued it to one of pure lyric beauty when the occasion demanded. An hour of bridge backstage while the audience assembled did not quiet the pianist's nerves to a point of insuring rhythmical stability or complete clarity of the harmonic design. A splendid lyric feeling was made manifest in the succeeding Brahms Intermezzo (B Flat Minor, Opus 117)."

Then followed a number of California concerts -- at Mills College, at the University of California, and in San Francisco. For five years he divided his time between his home in Berkeley, teaching in the City and County School of New York, and giving concerts in cities of the Southwest. He toured the United States and Eastern Canada during the season of 1937-38 under the management of Columbia Concerts Corporation, giving 78 concerts.

He gave three concerts in the Bay area while on this tour. Of his concert at the Campus Theatre, University of California, on March 23, 1937, the Oakland Post-Enquirer of the next day commented:

"His mature interpretation of one of the most difficult and spectacular programs to be presented by any pianist this season, raised him





to the realm of a great artist. The climax of the evening from a purely pyrotechnical standpoint, was Gordon's playing of Balakirev's Islamey (Oriental Fantasy), one of the most difficult compositions ever written for the piano ....Outswinging the 'swing' music of today was Tansman's Spiritual and Blues from the Sonata Transatlantique, the composer's conception of the way in which American jazz sounds to the European, and Gordon 'swung' it."

On October 26, 1937, he was guest artist with the Federal Music Project Chamber Group.

A New York recital at Town Hall October 3, 1938, brought very favorable press comment. Another is scheduled for March 15, 1940.

#### Sources:

Biographical sketch by Mrs. Michael Gordon, February 6, 1940.

San Francisco Chronicle, November 1, 1925.

San Francisco Examiner, September 7, 1929.

San Francisco News, September 7, 1929; August 5, 1938.

Oakland Post-Enquirer, May 19, 1932; March 24, 1937.



GOUGH, Flori, cellist (b. April 8, 1905, San Francisco). Parents: Mr. and Mrs. James Gough.

Flori Gough is San Francisco's contribution to the domain of the cello. In her field she is outstanding both for her choice of instrument and the virtuosity she has achieved.

After 2 years of study with Stanislaus Bem, she gave her first recital at the St. Francis Hotel on November 22, 1917, when 12 years old. The Pacific Coast Musical Review of December 1 was enthusiastic:

"The most remarkable factor of Flori Gough's playing is her big, luscious tone, drawn from a small instrument--atone that is rich and flexible, and is used to splendid advantage in compositions requiring depth of feeling and beauty of tone color.

"Flori Gough is on the right road, and with the necessary industry and perseverance she is bound to achieve high honors in one of the world's noblest professions. She has most assuredly scored a decided triumph, and she is well launched on the high wave of artistry. She possesses the necessary emotional and technical requirements to become a splendid artist. And there is no question in our mind that if she continues in the same manner in which she has begun, she will sooner or later be hailed as one of the chosen of her craft."

In 1920 she went to Paris and was one of the 5 selected out of 70 applicants to be admitted to the Conservatoire Nationale de Paris. Here she continued her studies for 4 years under Loeb, D'Ollone, Capet, and D'Indy. When she graduated in 1924 she had the distinction of being the only American cellist ever to have won the Premier Prix, and the only American in 20 years to have graduated with first honors.



The following year Flori Gough returned to San Francisco and took up her residence. She appeared as soloist with the Chamber Symphony under Alfred Hertz, March 7, 1926, at the Curran Theatre. She was head of the cello department of the San Francisco Conservatory from 1929 to 1934; was cellist of the Abas Quartet from 1930 to 1932; and gave several concerts in the city. In 1930 she married Lev Shorr, prominent pianist and pedagogue.

Her New York debut was made at two concerts in Town Hall on October 10 and 20, 1934, in which she was accompanied by her husband. Olin Downes in the New York Times of the next day wrote:

"It is a pleasure to hear a young artist of evident talent. Miss Shorr is well schooled. Her tone is warm and living. She feels music freshly and interprets it in more than a parrot manner. Today she has an excellently founded technique, obvious preparation as a musician as well as an executant, and a contagious enthusiasm for her art. In those works which asked the domination of the soloist she showed the grounding of a real virtuosity and musical power. In works that demanded an ensemble conception she was mindful of proportion, balance and significance of detail whether it was the piano or the cello that carried the movement. An audience of good size listened appreciatively and Miss Shorr played encores."

Engagements with the New York Civic Orchestra followed. Later she went to Los Angeles where she is now (1940) giving concerts and doing radio work.

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, San Francisco, November 17, 1917; December 1, 1917.

New York Times, New York, October 11 and 21, 1934.



HOWARD, Eula May, pianist (b. 1885, Grant's Pass, Oregon).  
Parents: John W. and Joan Howard.

Eula May Howard was a favorite concert pianist in San Francisco during the 1900s. Her earliest training at the keyboard was obtained from an unnamed pedagogue in Grant's Pass. In 1902 she came to San Francisco to further her studies with that master teacher, Hugo Mansfeldt. The Town Talk of May 30, 1903 tells briefly of her debut:

"On Wednesday evening of last week, Miss Eula Howard, a young pupil of Hugo Mansfeldt, gave a successful piano recital in Mr. Mansfeldt's studio. She rendered a program including the works of Brahms, Grieg, Schumann, Raff, Tschai-kowsky and Rubinstein, playing the selections entirely from memory and with admirable expression."

For the next 3 years her winters were spent in San Francisco studying with Hugo Mansfeldt and her summers in Oregon giving occasional concerts. In time she came to concentrate upon the works of Chopin. In reviewing one concert, Thomas Nunan of the San Francisco Examiner, on March 17, 1908, wrote:

"Eula Howard's piano recital at Century Club Hall last Thursday evening afforded a large audience the opportunity to hear one of California's most artistic musicians, a performer who seems certain to win distinction.

"Possessing unusual concert-platform advantages in her petite and winning personality and her attractive manner, the girl is gifted with a mind that seems all music and she has technical ability such as only the true pianists ever can acquire--keyboard skill that would be thought impossible for one so young.

"On Thursday evening Miss Howard played eight numbers from Chopin, her favorite composer. In





the first group were the Fantasia in F minor the D flat Nocturne and the Ballade in G minor. The latter ballad was familiar on Carreno's programmes. Although lacking the tremendous power of the famous woman from Venezuela, and playing with less rapidity, the San Francisco girl's performance did not suffer by the comparison.

"Characteristic of Miss Howard's playing was a beautiful singing effect of the overtones, and in several of the numbers, particularly the Tarantelle and the Wagner and Liszt compositions, this was so notable as to arouse pleasant memories of Hofmann's programmes."

Miss Howard -- who later became the wife of critic Thomas Nunan -- was known as "San Francisco's petite princess of the piano," and became very popular in musical circles. She appeared at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 and on a number of other occasions. When Mme. Schumann-Heink came in 1916, instead of bringing a special soloist with her, she engaged Eula Howard Nunan both as accompanist and soloist.

#### Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, San Francisco, May 14, 1905; Town Talk, San Francisco, May 30, 1903; August 28, 1905; January 19, 1907.  
Evening Telegram, Portland, Oregon, June 18, 1903.  
San Francisco Post, February 26, 1904.  
Morning Oregonian, Portland, Oregon, July 25, 1905.  
San Francisco Examiner, March 17, 1908.



KARON, Frances, violinist (b. May 21, 1920, Danville, Ill.).  
 Parents: Father, inventor, pianist; mother, pianist, violinist;  
 cousin, Mossaye Boguslawski, famous pianist.

Frances Karon had no formal musical training in her very early years, but when she was 12 began to play the piano by ear. David Wollner, who heard her play, diverted her attention to the violin, and set her on the course that was to prove most productive. She remained with Wollner for about 6 months, then studied with Arvid Bergman for a year and a half. Frances was given a scholarship with Kathleen Parlow, and worked with her for more than a year.

Louis Debovsky, her next teacher, taught her the results of his discoveries in the realm of violin bowing, and his anatomical knowledge of the bow hand. One of her more frequently noted characteristics is the power of her tone, a result of Debovsky's training.

Her San Francisco debut on April 16, 1935, at the Veterans' Auditorium was commented upon by the San Francisco Chronicle of April 17:

"It was evident that Miss Karon has an astonishingly large tone, and plays with great vigor, force and a high degree of mechanical accuracy."

The next year she gave another recital at the Veterans' Auditorium, at which she played the Nardini Concerto, the Bach Chaconne, and the Sinding Suite in A minor. The San Francisco Examiner of April 21, 1936, stated:

"Miss Karon gave a most impressive display of technical dexterity in the Sinding Suite in A



minor. Her fingers and her bow tossed off fire-works of altogether respectable brilliance."

Following this recital Frances was selected from hundreds of young violinists to study with Michel Piastro. After one year's study, she returned to the coast, and in 1938 appeared as soloist in the Bach Festival at Carmel.

She has played for Jascha Heifetz and Efrem Zimbalist, who were both favorably impressed, and predicted a brilliant future for her.

At present (1940), she is studying violin again with Debovsky and is continuing piano study with Janet Hale Gold. Within 6 months she is planning to give a concert tour of the Pacific coast and South America, playing the piano, harp, viola, and violin.

Sources:

Interview with Frances Karon and Mrs. Karon,  
January 15, 1940.

San Francisco Chronicle, April 17, 1935.

San Francisco Examiner, April 21, 1936.



KREINDLER, Sarah, violinist (b. March 20, 1911, San Francisco). Parents: Herman and Molly Kreindler.

Sarah Kreindler, the little girl whom the Pacific Coast Musical Review of January 14, 1922 called "the world's youngest violin soloist," began her studies with the prodigy-producing pedagogue, Sigmund Anker, at the age of 6, and continued with him for 8 years.

Between 1921 and 1923, she gave several recitals and concerts in the city, some as solo artist, but more often with the artist pupils of her teacher. Critics said that "she played with such aplomb and justness of accent" that they were "delighted," (Pacific Coast Musical Review, March 3, 1923); and that she "is credited with possessing in her diminutive self all the attributes of a virtuoso," (Pacific Coast Musical Review, January 14, 1922).

She is now (1940) engaged in Hollywood on the Good News Program with Meredith Willson.

Sources:

Interview with Sigmund Anker, January, 1940.  
Pacific Coast Musical Review, January 14, 1922;  
 March 3, 1923.





LAMPKIN, Joseph, violinist (b.1904, San Francisco).

Young Joseph's hearing a concert of the great Eugène Ysaÿe determined him to become a violinist. He began to study violin with Ben Tuttle of Oakland, and when 10 years old continued under the tutelage of Antonio da Grassi. Four years later, November 19, 1917, he made his debut in the Colonial Ballroom of the St. Francis Hotel. At that time he received most favorable notice from Alfred Metzger, the music critic of the Pacific Coast Musical Review:

"Young Lampkin...has a colossal memory...revealed astonishing technic. His phrasing was absolutely correct in tempo and accentuation. He succeeded in extracting every particle of emotional value from the strings, and he did it in a manner of which even the most serious musician need not be ashamed."

The program, which included the E minor Concerto of Mendelssohn, the Paganini-Kreisler Caprice #24, Scherzo-Tarantelle of Wieniawski, and Sarasate's Gypsy Airs was designed to give young Lampkin a chance to show what he could do. The San Francisco Chronicle, December 2, 1917, stated:

"The immortally young Concerto by Mendelssohn was played with classic finish and emotional fervor."

Following this debut, Lampkin was accepted as a student by Leopold Auer, and studied with the famous pedagogue for a year, after which he went to Europe. His Paris debut was as soloist with the Conservatoire Orchestra in 1923. At the first of two recitals in London's Aeolian Hall, he played the Glazunov Concerto; his distinguished accompanist was Gerald Moore.



At 19 he resided in Bucharest, studying with the world-renowned Jenö Hubay. After 4 years in the Roumanian capital, he returned in 1929 to San Francisco. Here he gave a single recital at the Scottish Rite Hall; of this Alexander Fried said in the San Francisco Examiner, February 25, 1929:

"His playing showed some violinistic skill but was seriously deficient in musical style and understanding."

Lampkin returned to Europe to continue his studies. He toured the Orient from 1934 to 1937 with conspicuous success.

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, November 24, 1917.

San Francisco Chronicle, December 2, 1917.

London Times, December 12, 1923.

Musical America, October 25, 1936.



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PETER PAUL LOYANICH  
(With teacher - Adolph Ryss)

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Photo: Courtesy of Mr. Adolph Ryss

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LOYANICH, Peter Paul, pianist (b.1927, San Jose, California).  
Parents: Peter Paul and Alexia Loyanich.

Peter Paul's father, a professional violinist who was employed by a San Jose radio station, moved his family to San Francisco when Peter Paul was 6 months old. At the age of 5, the child was discovered by his father picking out chords on the piano and this evidence of musical interest induced Mr. Loyanich to place his son with Adolph Ryss.

The ever-deepening depression made it constantly harder for Mr. Loyanich to secure engagements. Further lessons for Peter Paul seemed out of the question, but his talent was so remarkable that his teacher was willing to forgo payment. A more serious obstacle was soon placed in the boy's path -- the family piano was lost when it became impossible to continue payments. Mr. Ryss then allowed Peter Paul to use his piano, and when another pupil would arrive, Peter Paul stopped practicing, waited until the lesson was over, and then rushed to practice until there was a further interruption.

The driving urge characteristic of the real artist led the boy to work over a single phrase for hours until it satisfied him. So deep was his emotional response to music that it was not unusual for him to weep when some passage in particular appealed to him. Fortunately this strong subjective response was controlled by a precociously refined sense of proportion. A highly developed rhythmic sense and an exceptionally powerful tone were added to the facility and





musical memory common to prodigies. The sum of these qualities guaranteed the success of his first personal appearance.

He had been made a member of the junior section of the Pacific Musical Society and performed in November 1936 when that organization gave an Opera Tea attended by more than 600. Peter Paul was an unexpected sensation. So many requests were received by the boy's teacher to have the prodigy presented in concert that a debut recital was arranged for January 26, 1937, in the Veterans' War Memorial Auditorium under the management of Kay McLann. Marjory Fisher, critic of the San Francisco News, wrote January 27:

"Opening his program with the Bach Chaconne in the Busoni-Siloti arrangement, and continuing with the Beethoven Sonata No. 2, Mendelssohn's Phantasie in F sharp minor, a Chopin group and miscellaneous numbers by Liszt, Arensky and Locouna, young Peter Paul demonstrated accomplishments that may rightly be termed extraordinary. He played with a big, powerful tone, a limpid and brilliant technique, and interpreted Bach, Beethoven and Mendelssohn scores with an understanding which many debutants twice his age might well envy...."

In the San Francisco Chronicle of the same day, Alfred Frankenstein said:

"For once a child prodigy's playing does not call for airy ambiguities or downright tut-tutting. Peter Paul seems to have the genuine gift for music making, the innate, unteachable musical gift that divides the artist from those who wind up as critics...."

Six months later Peter Paul had the opportunity of playing the Bach Chaconne and the Liszt Concerto in E major for José Iturbi and Otto Klemperer in Hollywood. Iturbi was



deeply impressed. Although he had never consented to teach before, he insisted on taking the boy back to Philadelphia so that he might work with him every day for several months. The prestige of being Iturbi's protégé was in itself valuable. A more tangible and immediate benefit was an introduction to Eastern audiences.

On August 9, 1937, Peter Paul was guest artist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at a concert in the Robin Hood Dell. He played a group of piano solos and Musical America, September 1937, singled out for comment his performance of the Bach Chaconne, reporting that he played "quite capably, winning an enthusiastic reception."

An even more enthusiastic audience applauded his New York debut in Town Hall, January 29, 1938, and remained seated en masse at the end of his concert until several encores had been given. The critics proved harder to please and Peter Paul's "powerful tone" in the Chaconne became "harsh percussiveness" in the phrase of Musical America's review in the issue of February 10. The New York Times reviewer wrote on January 30, that both the Chaconne and the Beethoven Sonata in F minor were "rhythmically vague, filled with meaningless haltings and rushings of tempi and immaturely conceived." Both reviewers, however, were enthusiastic about the small numbers on the program, particularly the Alabiev-Liszt Nightingale which "demonstrated," for Musical America's critic, "a talent of extraordinary possibilities and already extraordinary development."



After this recital the increasing pressure of Mr. Iturbi's manifold activities as pianist and conductor made it impossible for him to give his protégé the personal attention necessary and the Loyanich family moved to Cincinnati where Peter Paul studied at the Conservatory of Music.

In April, 1939, almost 2 years after he left San Francisco, Peter Paul returned as guest artist with the San Francisco Symphony. The occasion was an all-Mendelssohn concert on the children's symphony series conducted by Ernest Schelling. Peter Paul's contribution was the first movement of a Mendelssohn piano concerto, with a Mendelssohn scherzo as an encore. Marjory Fisher wrote in the San Francisco News of April 24, 1939:

"One remembered Peter Paul as one of the most promising of the post-Menuhin lot of 'prodigies'. It was good to learn that the boy has made splendid progress during his stay in the East...Insofar as one could judge from the numbers played, Peter Paul gives every evidence of fulfilling the promise shown in his initial recital."

Sources:

Interview with Adolph Ryss, March, 1939.

San Francisco News, January 27, July 26, 1937;  
April 24, 1939.

San Francisco Chronicle, January 27, 1937.

Musical America, September, 1937; February 10, 1938.

New York Times, January 30, 1938.



LULL, Barbara, violinist (b. January 1905, Belmont, Calif.).  
 Parents: Henry M. and Alice Lull.

Barbara's mother, a violin teacher, gave her her first lessons. Maude Powell, who heard the child play at the age of 10, and Ysaye, who heard her a year later, both predicted a brilliant future for her. She went to Antonio de Grassi in 1915 and remained 4 years under his tutelage. Her first public recital was at the Twentieth Century Club House in Berkeley, in 1919, and the Pacific Coast Musical Review of April 26, wrote:

"It remains for Barbara Lull to carry off the greatest honors that any child could possibly manage. That a complete understanding exists between pupil and teacher was exemplified in the complicated and tuneful Sarasate duet Jota Navarre and the finished classic Sonata in G Minor of Handel. When the little girl of fourteen essayed the Rondo Capriccioso of Saint-Saens, it was an open mouthed audience that listened. Her intonation, bowing facility in the passages, rhythm, feeling, and in fact all that one could ask for, was there. We ascertained that she attends the public school in Berkeley and is an enthusiastic tennis champion, a lover of the out-of-doors and altogether a perfectly normal little girl, with the exception of this marvelous gift which she develops as happily and merrily as she does everything else."

At 16, her mother took Barbara to New York to get the expert opinion of Leopold Auer. He saw her great musical talent and she studied with him and Alexander Block for 3 years.

After a New York debut in 1925, Barbara Lull went to London. Two recitals in Wigmore Hall were so successful that she was offered an engagement in Albert Hall the following





month. Later, she played with great success in Holland and Germany. Several undated press clippings record her reception:

Der Deutsche, Berlin (1925):

"She should be reckoned among the foremost women virtuosi of the violin. Barbara Lull has a command of pure technique of the instrument which is wonderful."

Lokal Anzeiger, Berlin (1925):

"Her bowing is especially fine, of a natural freedom and well directed energy, which is remarkable."

Het Volk, Amsterdam (1925):

"What makes itself especially felt in her playing is her power and splendidly developed finger and bowing technique."

Reinforced with the prestige of a successful European tour, Barbara Lull returned to America and appeared at Town Hall, New York, November 5, 1928. The New York Times of the next day praised her warmly:

"The favorable impression she made here in former seasons was confirmed by her brilliant playing of a program that included Veracini's Sonata in E minor, Respighi's Concerto Gregoriano, the Dvorak-Kreisler Slavonic Fantasy, and shorter works of Josef Suk, De Falla and Wieniawski.

"A fine-spun tone of delicate beauty and warmth, a firm bow and emotional feeling tempered with artistic restraint, distinguished her performance of the varied items on her list. A former pupil of Leopold Auer and Alex Block, Miss Lull promises to fulfill the predictions of those who have followed her steady growth as a sincere and talented artist. She was applauded by a large audience."

Since then, she has appeared with the Cleveland and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, the Kansas City Little



Symphony, the People's Symphony Orchestra of Boston, besides having given numerous concert tours through Canada and the United States.

In 1929 she was married to Louis F. Rahn, a university professor, and at present lives in Princeton, New Jersey, where she continues her professional work.

Sources:

Interview with Antonio de Grassi, January 18, 1940.  
Pacific Coast Musical Review, April 26, 1919.  
Der Deutsche, Berlin, 1925.  
Lokal Anzeiger, Berlin, 1925.  
Het Volk, Amsterdam, 1925.  
Musical America, November 3, 1928; October 10, 1937.  
New York Times, November 6, 1928.



MAYER, Alice, (Frisca) pianist (b. March 7, 1900, San Francisco). Parents: Benjamin and Eva Mayer.

Alice (Frisca) Mayer -- who chose a modification of San Francisco for a professional name -- was taught by her mother to read music when she was 5 years old. In 1906 she began to study with Sam Fleishman and remained with him until his death 4 years later. During the next 10 years, her studies continued with Pierre Douillet.

Of her recital at the Sorosis Club in May 1917, Alfred Metzger in the Pacific Coast Musical Review of May 12, 1917, said:

"Miss Mayer possesses unusual vigor of attack and clean cut rhythmic accentuation. She plays with unquestionable musical intelligence, proving that her natural talent has been trained advantageously by a competent instructor."

Her first major recital was given on September 18, 1917, and the next morning Walter Anthony said in the San Francisco Chronicle:

"Her skill at the keyboard is splendidly developed, and her digital fleetness is remarkable for its lightness and speed."

On April 9, 1918, her program included Beethoven's Sonata, Opus 57 (Appassionata), and the Saint-Saens Concerto in G minor.

In the summer of 1918 she took a master course from Leopold Godowsky, whose criticism spurred her on to greater efforts. Later, during the annual convention of the California Federation of Music Clubs she won the MacDowell prize in the Young Artists' Contest.



Paris was the scene of her next success. Her debut there on October 15, 1920 was under the auspices of Les Amis des Artistes. Huchard said in Le Courier Musical:

"This pianist has a beautiful talent composed of charm and musicianship. Alice Frisca made her instrument sing, in Clair de Lune of Debussy, with a rendition singularly mysterious and evoking."

London, next, heard her play the Liszt E flat Concerto and the Grieg Concerto with the Queen's Hall Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry J. Wood. Leigh Henry in the Musical Standard after commenting on the "cynical insight into popular taste" which Miss Frisca showed in programming these two concertos, goes on to say that she "revealed the making of a very considerable artist. She has clarity of touch and a mastery of sonorous tone which never becomes dry or ponderous respectively."

She returned to New York in the fall and the Pacific Coast Musical Review, November 11, 1920, described the event:

"She created no less than a sensation at the close of the program the audience refused to leave the hall until she granted three encores."

With the People's Symphony Orchestra of San Francisco under the direction of Alexander Saslavsky she played the Liszt Concerto No. 1 on December 5, 1922.

Miss Mayer is married and now lives in New York where she continues to give concerts.

#### Sources:

Interview with Mrs. Eva Mayer, January 1940.

Le Courier Musical, Paris, October 19, 1920.

Pacific Coast Musical Review, May 21, November 19, 1921.





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HEPHZIBAH AND YALTAH MENUHIN

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*To our dear teacher, Mr Shorr, with deep affection.  
your loving  
Hephzibah & Yaltah  
Menuhin  
6.V.32*



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Photo: Courtesy of Mr. Lev Shorr

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*Journal of Management Studies*, 19(6), 701-718.

LENUHIM, Hephzibah, pianist (b. May 1920, San Francisco).  
Parents: Hoshie and Harutha Lenuhin.

Under the management of Alice Seckels, Hephzibah, aged 8, made her first and last solo appearance on October 25, 1928. She was denied an independent career as a child prodigy -- she was never to achieve the technical virtuosity of her famous brother Yehudi. But her passionate love of music and her inborn understanding of musical values were no less than Yehudi's, and the rapidity of her development was equally prodigious.

She, too, had to beg for an instrument and lessons long before they were granted her. An old newspaper clipping -- quoted in the Opera House News, June 1938 -- pictured the child " ...just 2 years old, who must wait till her fingers grow before she can have the coveted 'cello which she asks for each morning..." Her desire to make music became increasingly urgent until finally, when she was almost 5 years old, she was allowed to begin piano lessons with Judith Blockley.

Marjory Fisher in Musical America, October 27, 1928, recorded in an excellent article the details of Hephzibah's studios up to the time of her debut. During her 7-month study with Mrs. Blockley, she accomplished the work that the average pupil covered in 4 or 5 years. She was untiring, managing to prolong each lesson to a 2-hour session -- though not without opposition, for Mrs. Blockley was in constant fear that she might be reported to the SPCC for keeping a 4-year-old at the piano so long. The child simply refused to accept any suggestions that she might be getting tired.



Perhaps her mother was her greatest problem; for Mrs. Menuhin, not knowing the torment of talent, was inclined to interrupt lessons by talking to the teacher. Hephzibah's anger on these occasions was met with tolerant amusement. A more serious interruption to her studies occurred in 1926 when the whole family accompanied Yehudi to Europe when he went to study with Enesco.

Not until January 1928, did Hephzibah again study formally. Then, under the expert coaching of Lev Shorr, her notable gifts soon became evident. She was still unable to span an octave with her right hand, but there was little she was incapable of in scale and passage work. Bach's Italian Concerto she mastered in a month; 3 weeks were sufficient for Beethoven's Sonata, Opus 26; the Chopin Fantaisie Impromptu, 3 days! Yet music was occupying only a part of her time. Her general education proceeded just as rapidly. Cultural subjects she took to readily; her knowledge of French literature was phenomenal for one so young.

This list of accomplishments, however, should not be coupled with the picture of a child scolding its frivolous mother to build up the impression of a preternaturally solemn little prig. Hephzibah, like Yehudi, was one of the most adorable children -- friendly, gay, full of high spirits and energy -- her most characteristic expression was a warm, spontaneous smile. It was only with music that she became serious. She would withdraw, in those moments, into that same utter concentration which marked her brother's playing.



Her debut, October 25, 1928, at the Scottish Rite Hall, followed after only 18 months of formal study. In a hall crowded with excited people she played the Bach Italian Concerto, Beethoven's Sonata, Opus 26, Chopin's Fantaisie Impromptu, two pieces by Weber, and a group of encores. Redfern Mason, in the next day's San Francisco Examiner, wrote:

"Yehudi had something to do with the size of the house of course, but Hephzibah held the audience by sheer grace of her talent....

"Hephzibah's technique is notable but not extraordinary; what is extraordinary in her playing is its sincerity....

"Old Bach, Hephzibah manifestly loves. She played the slow movement of the Concerto with a rhythmic inevitability that many a mature musician would envy. The audience gasped, then burst into loud applause."

After this triumph, she did not appear in public for 6 years, and then -- and afterwards, in her rare appearances -- it was always as Yehudi's partner in sonata recitals. By that time she was a shy and reserved young girl, fond of being alone, with but an occasional yearning for a career. The parents had moulded her only too well into the pattern of what they believed a woman should be.

"Woman's place is in the home," was the adage which wrecked Hephzibah's career. In several interviews, Mrs. Menuhin created the ideal woman in her own image -- a home-loving woman whose prime endeavor was to make a good man happy. A concrete statement of this attitude appeared in the March 1938 Woman's Home Companion, under the signature of Harutha Menuhin:





"We have always praised Hephzibah far more for a well-balanced, well-executed dinner cooked by her than for any concert she has ever played with her brother."

In the face of this attitude only great talent and a sincere love for music could have brought Hephzibah to the degree of technical facility which she possessed as a young girl.

The Menuhins remained in Europe from 1929 to 1934, and Hephzibah studied occasionally with Marcel Ciampi. A portion of each day was given to practice, but the balance of the day she lived in an atmosphere in which music was as ubiquitous as oxygen. Her childhood in this remarkably close-knit family, bound by strong ties of affection and similarity of interests, was abundantly happy. In its beautiful surroundings and ease of security, she was constantly meeting interesting and distinguished visitors. The long happy summers were filled with hours of play -- but the crowning joy came when she was allowed to join Yehudi in making music. Thus these two strongly sympathetic natures became a single entity, an ideal instrument for the communication of master works.

The first fruit of this happy combination was the recording of the Mozart Sonata in A in December 1933. In the following June, it was adjudged the finest recording of the year by the French magazine Candide; and the prize, a substantial sum, was donated by the well-to-do Menuhins to a fund for indigent French musicians.



A few months later, October 13, 1934, Hephzibah made her second appearance -- her Paris debut -- with Yehudi in the Salle Rameau (formerly the Salle-Pleyel). Audiences accustomed to the familiar miracle of Yehudi wondered anew at the superb musicianship of the 14-year-old debutante. Her playing of sonatas by Mozart, Schumann, and Beethoven proved that she was to be considered seriously as an artist in her own right.

This program was repeated in Queen's Hall, London, on November 26. Tickets which had been placed on sale at 10 o'clock in the morning were sold out by 5 o'clock of the same day. The English reception was well reflected in the London Times of November 27:

"Miss Hephzibah Menuhin had evidently said to her brother: 'Don't let's have any of this bowing to applause before we've done anything to be applauded for,' and he had said 'Right!' and she, looking neither to the right or left, settled into her seat at the piano. The audience was excited. Everyone now knows Yehudi's quality; someone had said that she is just as good a pianist as he is a violinist and someone else had said she could not be.... Naturally there was a good deal of applause when they entered but Hephzibah just wriggled herself comfortably in her seat and waited. When the fuss subsided she shot off into the Mozart Sonata in A at a tremendous pace. They seemed to have agreed that Mozart's Allegro movements ought to be played as fast as possible and it showed what a finished executant she is that not a single detail was anything but perfectly clear, even though prestissimo seemed too mild a term for the pace of the finale.

"Their performance grew in interest through Schumann's Sonata in D minor and Beethoven's monumental Kreutzer for although it was her



efficiency which made the first impression in Mozart, it was soon clear in the richer texture of the later works that she brings more than that to the partnership. She can share with him that sense of the value of a fine phrase which raises his violin playing above the level of precocious virtuosity. In the slow movement of Kreutzer those variations in which the piano is the chief speaker showed interpretative ability of high order. Wherever as it often happens in duet sonatas, a single idea is passed to and fro between the players she knew how to handle it in sympathy with him. This was real sonata playing."

A few weeks later, the excitement of this London audience was duplicated in New York's Town Hall, when Hephzibah made her New York debut on December 19, 1934. In the December 25 issue, Musical America's critic remarked:

"...One forgot the comparative youth of the performers and revelled contentedly in the perfection of ensemble....Only occasionally was one overwhelmed with the amazing fact that the pianist's marvelous technique, inherent musicality, and feeling for style were the talents and accomplishments of a girl in her early 'teens.'"

When the Menuhins returned to San Francisco in 1935 it was hoped that this city in which Hephzibah had been born, and in which she received her first music lessons and made her debut, would have the privilege of hearing her play with Yehudi as had Paris, London, and New York. But such was not to be; instead, Moshe Menuhin chose to give the city a ringing rebuke for the absence of a symphony season -- a situation due to financial difficulties. On March 4, in the San Francisco Examiner, Alexander Fried quoted the father as saying:



"For the honor of San Francisco we must express a protest, a constructive protest...We hoped to have Hephzibah play with Yehudi here. To arouse San Franciscans to the tragedy of the Symphony, we have called the plan off."

Oddly enough, this piece of peculiar self-importance met with no criticism.

On March 29, 1935, the Menuhins sailed for Honolulu, the first step of a voyage which took them to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and back to Europe. In Australia, Hephzibah met Lindsay Nicholas, who was to become her husband. Throughout this tour, she had her own piano, both on land and on sea. Back in Paris, she was able to study for another 3 months with Marcel Ciampi before starting her 1936 season. Her concerts for that year, three in all, were again restricted to Paris, London, and New York.

The London correspondent of the New York Times compared the perfection of ensemble achieved by the brother and sister to that of Dusoni and Ysaye; and pointed out that whereas Yehudi was now in a period of transition, neither child nor man, Hephzibah displayed in its full bloom that wise innocence which had been his as a child. Olin Downes in the New York Times, March 25, 1936, stated that the ensemble had gained materially since its last appearance, and that Hephzibah had progressed in quality of tone, technique, and understanding.

In 1935, the elder Menuhins had purchased for Yehudi an 110-acre estate in the Santa Cruz Mountains, near Los Gatos,





California. Before continuing on their round-the-world tour, the cornerstone was laid for Villa Tcherkiss -- to be their retirement home -- and plans were made for a retreat during 1936-37. This was designated as "Mother's Year," a thanks offering to Marutha Menuhin.

A year and a half was spent in the "Mother's Year" retirement. A drowsy routine of morning practice, long afternoons of swimming and sun-bathing, and evenings of quiet family life made Villa Tcherkiss a real retreat, beneficial in every respect for the maturing artists. On August 11, 1936, Marutha said to a San Francisco Chronicle interviewer:

"Hephzibah yearns for Paris and solo recitals and a career of her own. I say, that it is better that she should be happy than famous.

"I tell her that the only immortality to which a woman should aspire is that of a home and children. Career women lose the most important things of life and do not realize until it is too late."

Nevertheless, when Yohudi emerged from retirement in 1937, Hephzibah was allowed to appear with him a dozen times in the largest American cities and capitals of Europe. San Francisco was finally allowed to hear her on June 21, 1938. The concert was announced as her last public appearance -- for in London she had become engaged to Lindsay Nicholas.

Arriving in San Francisco in April, she told Carolyn Anspacher of the San Francisco Chronicle that she had no qualms about giving up her career, and felt that in marriage she was "embarking on a finer career."



Surrounded by her family and future relatives, Hephzibah was married on July 16, 1938. On September 13 the young couple sailed for Australia to make their home on a 23,000-acre cattle and sheep ranch near Victoria.

Sources:

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Musical America, October 27, 1928; December 10, 25, 1934; February 10, 1935.  
London Times, November 27, 1934.  
San Francisco Chronicle, August 11, 1937.  
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See also: YEHUDI MENUHIN, Sources.



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YEHUDI MENUHIN  
(Early Childhood)

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Photo: Courtesy of Miss Jessica Fredericks

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MENUHIN, Yehudi, violinist (b. April 22, 1916, New York).  
Parents: Moshe and Marutha Menuhin.

In 1916, Yehudi's parents, descendants of Palestine Jews, were post-graduate students at the New York University. Recently married and poor, with no definite prospects, they regarded the coming of their first-born chiefly as an added financial problem. The Menuhin family had not been particularly outstanding musically. Marutha was a tolerable amateur pianist, Moshe had no musical training whatever, and there was no record of any notable musician in the family history. However, Moshe had been a mathematics major, which may have been a factor in the child's heredity, as there seems to be a subtle relationship between mathematics and musical ability.

The baby was named Yehudi, which means "Jew"; for the Menuhins were proud of their race and its cultural traditions. In October 1917 they moved to San Francisco where Moshe became director of the Jewish Education Society.

Shortly after their arrival, the symphony season began. Both of the parents were devout concert-goers, but Moshe's salary was not large -- certainly not enough to hire anyone to take care of Yehudi, then in his second year. As an experiment, they took the baby with them to a concert where, to their amazement, he neither cried nor slept but seemed to follow the music with intense delight. The experiment was repeated and then continued for the child behaved like a veteran attendant. Soon the trio were regular members of the symphony audiences.





During his first year of concerts, it was noticed that Yehudi began to make motions in imitation of fiddling. By the time he was 3 he begged constantly for a violin. The family, however, was too poor to afford one. At a party celebrating his fourth birthday, one of the guests presented him with a toy violin. Eagerly the child drew the bow across the strings. The sound that came out was far from musical, and in a fury of disappointment that the toy wouldn't "sing," Yehudi threw it down and stamped it to pieces.

That this action was not merely the tantrum of a spoiled child, and that his yearning for a violin might be a real need, impressed the boy's maternal grandmother who lived in Palestine. She sent the family \$25.00 to buy him an instrument. The first tone that Yehudi produced on his gift gave him such a pleasurable reaction that he was able to recall the particular sense of happiness years later.

He was 4 when his first violin lesson began with Sigmund Anker, on May 31, 1921, under whose tutelage he continued for 2 years. The fame of his later teachers -- Persinger, Enesco, Busch -- has obscured Anker's contribution to Yehudi's career; but credit for establishing a correct foundation, for the rapid development which interested Persinger, and for the already high degree of virtuosity which astounded his earliest audiences, must be given to the boy's first teacher.

According to Anker, Yehudi's progress for the first 6 months was no more remarkable than that of the average



pupil. His earliest appearance was at a studio recital on November 26, 1921, when he played "a tuneful little selection, Remembrance." Perhaps this first contact with an applauding audience awakened the performer in him, for from that time he began to develop rapidly, always bringing more than the assigned task to class. A more public appearance came on February 11, 1922, when he played a transcription of Paderewski's Minuet for the Pacific Musical Society. Another studio recital and a radio performance over KUO prepared the boy for his first large audience. On November 9, 1922, Yehudi played the Accolay Concerto for the second annual Music Week program, sponsored by the Pacific Musical Society. Redfern Mason, reviewing the program in the San Francisco Examiner, hailed the child as a genius and predicted he would become the master that he now is. His last pupil appearance, while with Anker, was before the Pacific Musical Society on February 11, 1923. Before he left Anker's tutelage he had mastered Sarasate's Gypsy Airs and the Mendelssohn Concerto.

In a letter from Moshe Menuhin dated January 29, 1940, the father says of Yehudi's early appearances:

"His first pupil appearance was in the Red Room of the Fairmont Hotel, on December 10, 1921, when he was approaching his fifth birthday. Yehudi, incidentally, was born on April 22, 1916 in New York City, and not on January 22, 1917, as the local public records claim. In other words, Yehudi was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  years old when he first appeared as a pupil in San Francisco.

"In 1922, and in 1923, Yehudi appeared twice each year again as a pupil.



"Yehudi's first public appearance was in conjunction with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, playing the De Beriot's Scene de Ballet, first at Oakland Auditorium on February 29, and then in the San Francisco Civic Auditorium on March 12, 1924.

"Yehudi's first professional appearance where the public paid him admissions to hear him--a concert on our own account--was on March 30, 1925, in the Scottish Rite Auditorium, San Francisco, California. It was a full recital program, and Mr. Persinger, Yehudi's local teacher, was serving also as accompanist on that occasion."

Meanwhile, Yehudi had continued attending all of the symphony concerts. Concertmaster Louis Persinger was his special idol, and at home Yehudi would attempt to imitate each detail of his performance. It was the boy's intense absorption during the symphonies and his excited discussion at home, more than his rapid progress with Anker, which determined his parents to seek advice from competent persons on ways to direct this passionate interest. A discussion with Reuben Rinder, cantor of the Temple Emanu-El, led to an interview with Louis Persinger. Rinder grasped immediately the boy's possibilities.

The meeting of the maestro and his greatest pupil was recalled by Persinger in an article in the New York Times, January 26, 1930. Without knowing who Yehudi was, Persinger had noted the child in the first row at symphony concerts and saw how attentively he watched each move and gesture. "I, too, was attracted," said Persinger, "by the grave demeanor of this almost infantile listener." But many auditions of alleged



"Wanderkinder" had made him skeptical of further encounters. As a result, he put off as long as he could having to listen to the "find" of his cantor friend Rinder. At last he consented and an audition was arranged. Before Yehudi had finished his demonstration, Persinger stopped him. The child glared furiously at him; but the teacher assured him that no further demonstration was needed -- he would accept him as a pupil. This was the first of the numerous happy turns of fortune which were to come to the prodigy.

Persinger was a brilliant violinist, but as a pedagogue fully merited the label of "the Auer of America." Arthur Nikisch said that he was one of the most talented pupils of the Leipzig Conservatory when he called Persinger to be concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic.

When the World War started Persinger returned to his native America to become concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony under Hertz. He had rarely beautiful tone and his interpretations were at once poetical and intelligent. With inexhaustible patience, he passed these qualities on to Yehudi, to whom he gave hours of teaching marked by a methodical attention to detail.

In order that this might be possible a small fortune was needed, which with dreamlike ease was found. Sidney Ehrman, a cultured and wealthy San Francisco lawyer, was interested through the efforts of Cantor Rinder and Dr. Samuel Langer, and he financed the family during the years the boy





studied in San Francisco. After Yehudi's tremendous success as 9-year-old soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, Mr. Ehrman advanced the family \$20,000 to enable the boy to make concert appearances in New York and Europe.

Having found both patron and teacher, Yehudi threw himself into study with a single-minded passion. An illness confined him to his bed when he was 6 years old and practice was forbidden. He begged for and was given a copy of a Spohr Concerto which he was studying, and when his illness was over he could play the concerto from memory.

On March 12, 1924, more than 6000 school children were herded into the San Francisco Civic Auditorium to celebrate Public School Music Day. For 7 minutes they squirmed and rattled programs while the head of the public school musical activities and a representative of the federated womens' musical clubs fluted platitudes about the cultural value of the occasion.

When the musical program finally got under way, boredom was followed by a mild pleasure and observers noted that a Grieg dance and Mendelssohn's Spinnlied were received with all the signs of enjoyment. But when 7-year-old Yehudi Menuhin came out with his violin and whirled through several Magyar airs, the children cheered him to the rafters and the critics spread the news that a truly sensational prodigy had appeared.

Thus heralded, his debut recital at Scottish Rite Hall on March 25, 1925 was packed. All the violinists in town



were there "to be shown," as Redfern Mason of the San Francisco Examiner stated the next day. "Let your pen fly," Louis Ford of the Chamber Music Society told him. "You can't overdo it. This boy puts us all to shame."

"As the fluent periods of Vieuxtemps' Fantasia Appassionata unfolded," recorded Mason, "people looked at one another in wonder. When he played the Mendelssohn Concerto, their astonishment deepened. This is not talent; it is genius."

New York was not as easily conquered. Though the audience in the Manhattan Opera House, January 1926, forced him to exhaust all his encores and applauded until the management had to ring down the curtain, the concert did not attract widespread critical notice. The careful Musical America admitted that "the bravura portion of the various numbers were disposed of with a facility and dash almost incredible for one of his years," but felt it necessary to add that "from the interpretative point of view there was naturally, little that was authentic."

No such caution was evident in the reviews that recorded the prodigy's two appearances in San Francisco when he returned. His recital on March 4, 1926 led Alexander Fried, then on the San Francisco Chronicle, to the verge of blasphemy. "What built the world in six days is what contrived the genius of Yehudi," he said. "He walks on the waves." When Yehudi played with the Symphony in the Curran Theatre on March 12, a similar feeling made Redfern Mason think "of the boy Samuel



in the scriptures and how the voice of God spoke to him in the night watches." Mason noted that "the violinists in the orchestra looked at one another and smiled. They recognized a master." So did Yehudi's patron, Sydney Ehrman who immediately made it possible for the Menuhins to go abroad in order that Yehudi might study with Enesco, then living in Paris. This brilliant Rumanian composer, conductor, and violinist was to become the greatest musical influence in Yehudi's career.

"I did not go to Europe merely in order to be in Europe," explained Yehudi when he came to write his first article for the Washington Sunday Star in 1934. "...it is not the European atmosphere but the personal Enesco atmosphere that helps me and always inspires me." Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Yehudi went to see Enesco backstage following a recital. "I want to see you," said the boy, simply. An appointment was made for the following morning. "I want to study with you," announced Yehudi. At Enesco's request he played something and was immediately accepted. Hekking, the well-known cellist had been present at this audition and he and Enesco persuaded Paul Paray, then conductor of the Lamoureux Concerts, to let Yehudi play the Lalo's Symphonic Espagnole with the orchestra. His success was sensational and two recitals at the Salle Gaveau followed.

Although wildly enthusiastic press notices from the Paris papers came to the attention of New York reviewers,



they were still skeptical. French critics were notoriously unreliable. Yehudi was still comparatively unknown in New York until he appeared with the New York Philharmonic and played the Beethoven Violin Concerto on November 25, 1927. This was considered his real New York debut. He was 10 at the time, younger than either Mischa Elman or Heifetz had been at the time of their New York debuts.

Yehudi's playing of the Joachim cadenza brought cheers that threatened to stop the concerto. Olin Downes said in the New York Times, November 26: "It seems ridiculous to say that he showed a mature conception of Beethoven's Concerto but that is the fact." This was echoed by Oscar Thompson of Musical America who found in Yehudi's playing "nothing of childishness....It was...startingly mature."

At Yehudi's first Carnegie Hall appearance a few weeks later, 300 chairs were on the stage and police reserves had to be called out to handle the crowd. Despite their efforts many individuals managed to enter the auditorium by way of the fire escapes, cellar windows, and the roof. Celebrities stood through the program and others were unable to buy standing room. The next morning the New York papers carried columns of praise and from that time on Yehudi himself was a celebrity whose comings and goings were fully reported.

On the day after his Carnegie Hall appearance seven wealthy patrons tried to engage Yehudi for private recitals offering fees as high as \$5000. All were refused. During





1928 offers of over \$200,000 were received by Yehudi's managers from impresarios all over the United States and Europe.

The decision not to accept any further engagements that year was a crucial one for Yehudi's development. Some of the prodigies to follow in Yehudi's footsteps were to suffer from overlong hours of practice, insufficient physical recreation, the nervous strain of too many concerts in their earliest years, and worst of all, the lack of any general cultural education. Thanks to the intelligence of his parents, Yehudi escaped all this.

For years the Menuhin home was planned as a background for Yehudi's development. A balanced day of practice, study, and recreation was arranged. With Persinger the boy studied the scores of the classics, strict counterpoint, analysis of form, orchestration, and the details and meaning of a tremendous repertoire of concertos and concert pieces. With a corps of tutors, he familiarized himself with languages and literature. With his father he studied history and mathematics.

At breakfast, records of the music of Beethoven, Schubert, and Liszt were played and discussed by the whole family. In the evening Yehudi and his parents attended every important concert.

But 12:30 to 3 every afternoon, and all day Sunday, was spent out of doors hiking, playing handball or tennis, or motoring; and during the summer months each week-end found the family taking trips into the country.



Late in 1929, Enesco, while making a concert tour of the United States, visited the Menuhins and there was an artistic "family council" between Ehrman, Moshe Menuhin, and Enesco. It was decided that the boy should restrict his concert appearances to 15 or 20 a year and spend the rest of the time in Europe in quiet study and a conservative mode of living which included plenty of rest and recreation. Enesco also advised a few years of study with Adolph Busch so that Yehudi would become familiar with the German school.

On December 18, 1928 he played a farewell concert in San Francisco to 7000 people, with Louis Persinger accompanying him at the piano. He played on a \$30,000 Guarnerius, his first full-sized violin.

Already he had built up the momentum of success which insures further success. Among the enthusiastic thousands who crowded his New York recital of January 7, 1929, were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Goldman. So impressed were they by Yehudi's genius that they gave him an instrument worthy of it -- a \$60,000 Stradivarius.

After another recital in February, Yehudi and his family sailed for Europe. On April 12, he made his historic debut at Berlin playing the Bach, Brahms and Beethoven concertos in a single program with the Berlin Philharmonic under Bruno Walter. The most severe Berlin critics filled columns with praise. Later in Paris and Dresden the same program had the like success.

Most of 1929 was spent in Basle. With Adolph Busch, Yehudi explored the classic violin literature. Long walks



into the country with his father built up his strength and gave him renewed energies for study. In November he set out again on his travels, making his London debut under Fritz Busch with the London Philharmonic. The London Times' critic wrote that his performance was truly astonishing, and said it "fully deserved all the enthusiasm with which it was greeted."

On the last day of 1929, Yehudi landed again in New York and the January 1 issue of the New York Times carried an advertisement announcing that his forthcoming recital in Carnegie Hall was completely sold out. January, February, and March were filled with successful appearances in the largest American cities, and an audience of 10,000 filled the Civic Auditorium on March 31, when Yehudi returned to San Francisco.

In April he was back again in Europe and after a single concert in Paris on May 8, resumed his study with Adolph Busch in Basle. The following winter and spring repeated the pattern of 1930, a European and American tour; and the summer of 1931 found the Menuhins in a new home near Versailles. In Paris, Yehudi renewed his studies with Enesco. The Paris Conservatoire awarded him its premier prix and he was made an honorary member of the Association Amicale des Prix de Violin.

Yehudi's tours had yielded rich rewards. By now financially secure, living in a beautiful country home, visited by an increasing number of the musically great, the boy was crossing that line which distinguishes prodigy from artist.



Seldom has an artist been given the opportunity to develop under such ideal conditions and surroundings. Contradicting the theory that the artist requires obstacles as a spur to achievement, Yehudi worked ceaselessly to acquire a technique that would enable him to surpass the greatest virtuosos of the past.

During his 1932 tour Yehudi was granted an honor shared by no other living musician. Six famous continental orchestras altered their regulations to allow Yehudi to play a complete program of concertos. Instead of the usual practice of having the soloist as a guest artist for one concerto, the most famous orchestras in the world became Yehudi's accompanists -- Karl Muck of Hamburg, Fritz Busch of Berlin, Bruno Walter of Leipzig, Ernő Dohnányi of Budapest, Georges Enesco of the Paris Conservatoire, and Frank Schalk of Vienna.

Another highlight of 1932 was an ocean crossing with Toscanini during which one of Yehudi's greatest dreams came true. The great conductor had been interested in the boy ever since he had first heard him in 1929 and he invited Yehudi to make music with him in his cabin daily from 11 o'clock in the morning until 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Yehudi's trunkful of scores were laid out on the table -- Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and many others. A letter of Moshe Menuhin's quoted in the New York Times, June 5, 1932, gives an interesting picture of one of these sessions:

"...from the beginning the boy insisted 'Please, maestro, criticise me right and left, without





hesitation. These will be my most precious lessons....

"After Yehudi had finished Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata, Toscanini burst out, 'Yehudi caro, bravo! Bravissimo! This is perfect, this is real music ... Oh! how little good music I hear in my life... Come, my child, play, play! Go on and on! Your singing is so natural, so fine...'"

The winter of 1932 was notable for his appearance with the London Philharmonic as soloist in the first performance of Sir Edward Elgar's Concerto in B minor with the famous composer conducting.

By now, Yehudi, aged 16, was a full-fledged professional artist devoting 5 months out of the year to appearances in Europe and America and 7 to study and recreation. He had become one of the greatest box office attractions the concert world has ever known, booked for seasons ahead, and often his concerts were sold out weeks in advance.

The Paris correspondent of Musical America, June 1933, gives a picture of a typical concert of those years. Six hundred additional seats were brought into the Salle Pleyel and all available places for standees were filled. Yehudi again played Elgar's Concerto with the composer conducting. "Excitement was maintained at a high tension and midnight found the excitement still unabated." The audience was an exceptionally brilliant one, including members of the Cabinet, foreign Ambassadors, musical celebrities, and the leaders of society. Stokowski and Koussevitsky were among those who rushed back to congratulate Yehudi and "everybody



agreed that sensational as Menuhin has always been he is greater now."

Six months later when he opened a new season the number of those who were turned away from the Salle Pleyel was equal to those who attended; the same happened at Albert Hall, London, and at the Augusteo in Rome.

In October 1934 he set out on a world tour and by December 1935 he had given 110 concerts in 73 cities and 13 countries, including 6 sonata recitals with his sister Hephzibah. He then retired for 2 years of rest and study on his beautiful 110-acre estate near Los Gatos, California.

By now one of his major interests was the recovery of forgotten or neglected works of the masters and the playing of masterworks in their "ür-text." He had come to hold the heterodox opinion that the composer was the best judge of what he was attempting to do and that later abridgements, rearrangements, alterations of dynamics, and other changes in the original text combined to obscure the composer's intentions.

As a result of this archaeological interest the feature of Yehudi's first season following his long retirement was his presentation of the so-called "lost" Schumann Concerto, written for Joachim just before the composer lost his mind. Originally scheduled for performance August 22, 1937, the American premiere was postponed until December 6, because the German Government desired to present it first at Leipzig. Some critics have agreed with Yehudi's contention



that it was completed in the fullness of Schumann's powers and represented a link between Beethoven and Brahms; others insisted that much of it was wandering and incoherent and that it would have been kinder to have followed Joachim's example in keeping it from the public.

What all the critics agreed upon was that Yehudi was as great an artist as he had been a prodigy. Audiences, overflowing onto the concert stage in 78 cities, acclaimed Menuhin the greatest musical artist yet produced by America.

Only occasionally do critics point out Menuhin's limitations; a certain lack of warmth; a tone of silvery quality but sometimes wanting in fullness; and over-emphasis on virtuosity; an almost total lack of interest in modern composers, and American composers in particular. In the face of his accomplishments however, in the field which he has demarcated for himself, his limitations appear of small importance.

In 1938 he became engaged to Nola Nicholas, an Australian heiress, and they were married on May 27. On September 29, 1939, the erstwhile prodigy became a father. The child, a girl, was given the Russian name Zamira which means "Peace."

Yehudi Menuhin is now (1940) 24 years old, an age at which many young violinists are only making their debut, yet already he has played a dozen seasons of tours -- 447 concerts in all. He has played in 138 cities; New York has acclaimed him 42 times; Paris, 19; Lond, 18. His 158 recordings



have made him known in the Americas, Europe, South Africa, Australia, and the Orient. Truly, a prodigy of prodigies -- of the class of Elman, Heifetz, Hofmann -- to whom a deeper experience will bring new meanings to communicate. And then the flawless virtuosity will find its proper employment as a transparent medium for the truths the artist has to tell.

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YEHUDI MENUHIN  
(The Virtuoso)

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Photo: Courtesy of Miss Jessica Fredericks

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MITZEL, Kayla, violinist (b. 1915, Winnipeg, Canada).

From obscurity to obscurity is the path of many child prodigies. Kayla Mitzel, of Russo-Hungarian parentage, followed that path, but the mid-point in her career justified for her the term prodigy.

She studied with Louis Persinger for 7 years before she was presented to the public. Her debut, November 30, 1928, brought forth the comment by Redfern Mason in the San Francisco Examiner, November 30, 1928, that "Kayla is a notable talent; so much may be said without hesitation. Whether she will cross the boundary line which divides talent from that indefinable entity we call genius, remains to be seen." After a concert with the Portland Symphony Orchestra, William van Hoogstraten said that she was "a superb musician." Rodzinski, of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, declared her "a youthful genius, a mature artist."

Favorable notices in the press followed her concert tour of Europe. When she returned to her native Canada, the Toronto critics summed up her concert as "a memorable performance." When death cut short the career of Paul Kochanski, Kayla was chosen to fill his engagements on the Pacific coast. This tour was another series of triumphs. She made a comprehensive tour of Canada during the season of 1934, and appeared with the Harrisburg (Pa.) Symphony on March 15, 1937.

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, August 20, September 4, 1928.

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Musical America, August, 1934.



MYERS, Mischa, violinist (b. November 6, 1923, Los Angeles, California). Parents: Nathan and Dora (Goldwater) Myers.

Both parents were born in the British Isles of large, middle-class Jewish families -- Mr. Myers became a journalist; Mrs. Myers, a talented dancer. The family moved to Los Angeles in 1920 where, in 1926, Mischa was enrolled for a short time with the Meglin Kiddies.

The boy's parents, impressed with his dexterity in playing melodies by ear, placed him at the age of 4 to study with Robert Ashman, eminent pedagogue and virtuoso. He was given a sixteenth-size violin -- others proving too large -- and after 7 months of study, he played the "Barcarolle" from The Tales of Hoffmann before Mischa Elman and 5000 children at the Breakfast Club's Christmas Party.

In 1929 the family's fortunes collapsed and a trying time ensued, but fortunately, the teacher agreed to forego any remuneration until conditions changed. During this time Mischa received offers of scholarships from Zimbalist, Kochensky, and Piastro, which were not accepted. In 1930 Mischa appeared with the Santa Monica Philharmonic Society.

Thinking that conditions might turn out better for the family if a fresh start were made in a new place they came to San Francisco. It was not very long before the boy's talent and personality impressed local sponsors, and the means for further study were supplied.

On December 11, 1936, in the Veterans' Auditorium, Mischa made his professional debut; but the program was too



ambitious. Mandel's Sonata No. 1 in A major, Lalo's Symphonie Espagnole, and Bach's Sonata No. 1 were included. Alfred Frankenstein said in the San Francisco Chronicle, December 12:

"He seems to have a distinct musical gift, but should not present publicly large scale works that are far beyond his present capacity. He has the rudiments of a fine tone and a certain embryonic facility....but it can only ruin his future to repeat last night's performance."

Marjory Fisher wrote in the San Francisco News:

"One demands more than a feat of memory and evidence that one has practiced very hard....It was not his fault that the program was far beyond his technical and musical attainments....until he has learned to play in tune at least 85% of the time, for his own good he should be kept off the public platform."

Despite the gloomy mutterings of the critics, the concert paid for itself, and a group of San Franciscans decided that Mischa was worthy of support. He was placed under the tutelage of Naoum Blinder, concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. His studies also include theory and harmony with Julius Gold, piano with Gertrude Shenson, and languages with Mme. Normand.

His most important public appearance since his debut was as guest violinist with the Carmel Bach Festival, 1933.

#### Sources:

Interview with Nathan Myers, March 6, 1939.

Los Angeles Evening Herald, April 24, 1931.

San Francisco Examiner, February 3, 8, 1932.

San Francisco Chronicle, February 8, 1932;

December 12, 1936.

San Francisco Call-Bulletin, December 12, 1936.

San Francisco News, December 12, 1936.





PAGLIUGH, Lina, vocalist (b. May 27, 1908, New York).  
 Parents: Giovanni and Mary Pagliughi.

Darling of the North Beach, San Francisco's Italian section, the dark-eyed Lina Pagliughi was called "una bambina prodigiosa." When the discriminating Italian uses these words he means a great deal, but when he adds further that she is "una Tetrzzini Dodicenne," the peak of superlatives has been reached. She made her debut on April 28, 1919, at the Washington Square Theatre in San Francisco in a program sponsored by L'Italia, local Italian newspaper. Her program included "Caro Nome" from Rigoletto and "Musette's Valse Song" from La Boheme, which she sang with a coloratura of such ease and purity that it astonished her audience.

The child was brought to San Francisco at 3 months of age. Her father, a mattress maker and upholsterer, had difficulty providing her musical education. Her teachers were: Mr. Serantoni; Silvia Puerari-Marracci, with whom she remained several years; and Domenico Brescia, with whom she studied until she sailed for Milan, in April of 1926, to resume with N. O. Baragnoli.

On December 20, 1919, Lina Pagliughi, the "Tetrzzini of twelve," appeared in a joint recital at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium. The impression she made was the favorite topic of conversation in the colony the next day. Great plans were made for the child's future. The Pacific Coast Musical Review of January 3 reported:



"Lina Pagliughi revealed a voice of fine quality and fine range, unusually big in volume for a coloratura, and she sang with fervor and temperament. She possesses all the elements that justify the prediction of a brilliant career. She received an enthusiastic reception from her audience."

Madame Tetrazzini was in the city at the time, and attended the concert. She became interested enough in the diminutive edition of herself to advise several years of intensive study rather than public singing. This advice was taken, and her formal debut was delayed until November 22, 1925. Redfern Mason, in the San Francisco Examiner of the next day wrote:

"Her singing exemplifies ease and fluidity. It is of perfect coloratura quality, and not the vocal gymnastics so often foisted upon us.... Her upper register is of lovely quality, the lower lacking in volume, which will come in time....I vorily believe that Lina Pagliughi will develop into an artist of whom San Francisco will have better reason to be proud of than it has of Luisa Tetrazzini. For Lina has brains and a heart, and Tetrazzini was a mere vocal machine."

With this great encouragement, the Italian colony gave her a benefit, raised \$3,000, and sent the 18-year-old girl to Italy to complete her musical education. Five years later, on New Year's Day of 1931, she made her operatic debut at La Scala Opera House, Milan, the Mecca of all singers. While there she married Primo Montanari, an Italian tenor.

South America, Australia, and some European cities heard her as Gilda, Rosina, and Lucia, her favorite roles. Then came London and much praise by the newspapers. From the London News Chronicle, September 10, 1938:



"Lina Pagliughi can do anything she likes with her voice. She is a brilliant type and her notes fall in sparkling showers. At Queen's Hall last night she made the audience hysterical with such old time favorites as 'Una Voce,' 'Caro Mio,' and the 'Mad Scene' from Lucia."

The London Daily Mail, September 10, 1930:

"For once the strictest purist could scarcely find anything to cavil at. She is not merely a coloratura specialist....but she can also sing songs with grace, point and perfect tact...."

The London Telegraph, September 10, 1938:

"Signora Lina Pagliughi....is one of the greatest singers of the age, and probably supreme in her own line, coloratura."

Final triumph of the little Italian girl from Telegraph Hill was her return to San Francisco. The girl who left so hopefully 14 years before returned to the War Memorial Opera House for a concert January 28, 1940. Described by Alexander Fried in the San Francisco Examiner of the following day:

"Miss Pagliughi conforms to a past style of prima donna avoirdupois of which Tetrassini used to be the double plump exponent par excellence.

"Make no mistake about it: Miss Pagliughi is young, short, cheerfully comely -- and stout!

"For a coloratura, her voice is remarkably strong. It has an appealing freshness up and down the scale. Especially her top tones -- though sometimes they lose sweetness -- have startling power. Among her loveliest effects, however, are her pianissimi.

"Not only are her runs and staccati accurate, sparkling and swift, but she attacks them with an unsurpassed daring and freedom. She took them so easily, in fact, that they were not very exciting.



"She also sang simple melodies too. In them her ability found pleasing contrast in an honest, fine warmth of sentiment.

"Thanks partly to an ardent North Beach delegation, the sizable audience gave Miss Pagliughi enthusiastic welcome. Encores were numerous..."

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, August 1, December 20, 1919; January 3, 1920.

San Francisco Examiner, November 23, 1925; April 27, 1930; January 7, 1937; January 29, 1940.

San Francisco Chronicle, March 5, 1926.

London News Chronicle, September 10, 1938.

London Daily Mail, September 10, 1938.

London Telegraph, September 10, 1938.

New York Examiner, September 10, 1938.

L'Italia, San Francisco, March 6, 1939.





RICCI, Ruggiero, violinist (b. July 24, 1920, San Bruno, California).

Ambrose Bierce has told the sad story of the wolf who tried to cross a chasm in two jumps. It begins to look as if Ruggiero Ricci will achieve this impossible feat successfully. He leaped into fame as a violinist at the age of 10. After his New York debut in 1930 many critics hailed him as a second Mozart, more promising than Menuhin. A few years later they were preparing his artistic obituary: he was failing fast, a return to obscurity, his apparent destiny. By 1954 he had somehow reversed his direction. At present (1940), he again seems assured of a brilliant career.

No other prodigy had a more humble beginning. Ruggiero's father, Pietro Ricci, was a poor Italian immigrant. Working variously as day laborer, fruit picker, and welder in a San Francisco foundry, Pietro struggled to earn a precarious living for his constantly increasing family. His real passion was music and here his activities were also various for he could play trombone, guitar, and piano equally badly. Deficiencies of taste and technique were not due to any lack of talent; he had never had any opportunity to develop his ability. As each of his children grew up -- eventually there were seven -- an instrument was provided and such rudimentary instruction as he could impart. Thus, like the Bach children, the young Riccis came to compose a family orchestra.

When Ruggiero was 4 his father discovered he had absolute pitch; he became the orchestra's violinist, and



finally its leader. Violin playing was not among Pietro's accomplishments but somehow he was able to teach Ruggiero to scratch out "The Bluebells of Scotland" and the "Intermezzo" from Cavalleria Rusticana. The intensity of feeling that the child was able to inject into these simple pieces led neighbors to urge his father to take him to a professional teacher. Maybe, they suggested, he might be another Menuhin. As Yehudi had just made a sensational debut, presented by Persinger, it was to Persinger that Ruggiero was brought by his father.

The little boy played through his repertory of two pieces. Persinger said he would be unable to find time to teach him but advised Mr. Ricci to see his assistant Miss Elizabeth Lackey who lived in Berkeley. Discouraged, Pietro waited 6 months before acting on this advice.

Miss Lackey noted the thin, nervous appearance of the child -- too big eyes in a pale, serious face. Yes, she would take him, she said, if he could stay over week-ends. Pietro agreed to this and from October to Easter, the 6-year-old Ruggiero commuted between San Bruno and Berkeley in the care of a 10-year-old sister. His tremendous talent soon became obvious and by Easter Miss Lackey wanted to adopt him. The parents refused but accepted a counter-proposal that gave his teacher legal custody until he was 21.

Now his studies began in earnest and he worked with Miss Lackey daily, with Persinger at frequent intervals. In 1927, aged 7, youngest in a field of 23 contestants, he won



an Oscar Weil Scholarship. Persinger gave him an increasing amount of time. He began to appear before various musical organizations and people realized that the peerless Yehudi would soon have a rival. Although his technical facility was as remarkable as that of Yehudi, it was his much more precocious (almost morbid) emotional development that made his earliest audiences wonder. Yehudi's playing, though technically that of an adult, was emotionally that of a sunny, happy child. In Ruggiero's performances there were occasional indications of a tragic feeling incomprehensible in a child.

His rapid development and growing reputation enabled his teachers to find patrons, indispensable aids to a prodigy's career. Mrs. Frederick H. Bartlett, wife of a wealthy Chicago oil operator and sister of Mrs. Persinger agreed to contribute the funds necessary for a debut at San Francisco's Scottish Rite Auditorium.

On November 15, 1928, the 8-year-old child stood shoulder high to the grand piano presided over by Louis Persinger and played Vieuxtemps' Fantasia Appassionata, Mendelssohn's Concerto in E major, Saint-Saens' Rondo Capriccioso, Wieniawski's Scherzo Tarantelle and other short numbers before a startled audience of 1000 musicians and music lovers. He drew from his little \$30, three-quarter size fiddle a tone of exquisite quality revealing a power and delicacy that came from within the player himself. His interpretations were of a nature that could not have been "poured in" by musical pedagogues.



Almost a year later, on October 20, 1929, he made his New York debut with the Manhattan Symphony Orchestra at Mecca Hall, where he repeated his first triumph. Music critics rallied to his support; the ultra-conservative Olin Downes wrote in the New York Times, October 21:

"Always he played with a living, warm and on occasions brilliant tone. It had a hundred shades of color in it, despite a violin with its own limitations of size and quality. It was the playing of an Italian, with the inborn suppleness, sensitiveness and lyrical feeling of his race, as also that clear precision which seems a characteristic of the best Italian minds. And it was the playing of one born to play his instrument."

As Ruggiero rose to fame and his future became assured, father Pietro doubted the wisdom of having signed over his son's legal guardianship to Miss Lackey. At the age of 21, the boy would no longer be a prodigy earning tremendous sums, and at that age all too many child prodigies have fallen by the wayside.

Mrs. Bartlett joined forces with Ruggiero's father in a long and bitter battle through three different courts for the boy's custody. The Riccis instituted proceedings in California's courts contending that Miss Lackey's guardianship had been made without their knowledge and that she was exploiting the boy to the detriment of his health and general education. They presented a copy of a contract for 1930 in which he was required to play 10 concerts and also got a doctor to testify that 10 concerts would be a strain upon the boy's nervous system.





Miss Lackey, in turn, pointed to Ruggiero's rival, Yehudi Menuhin, who at the same age played far more concerts, and also to the historical precedents of the boys Mozart, Paganini, and Liszt. The upshot of this battle -- now transferred to the New York courts -- was that legal custody was awarded to the parents and the boy permitted to remain with Miss Lackey. Another concert was arranged for, but Mayor Walker of New York revoked the concert hall permit. Shortly afterward, the boy ran away or was spirited away from Miss Lackey and reappeared in his father's house.

When this episode was again aired in court, the final decision was that the boy would remain with his parents and that Miss Lackey and Mr. Persinger were forbidden to see him. But meanwhile Ruggiero's lessons were neglected and, what was worse, his spirit was broken by the long quarrel and its resultant division of loyalty between parents and teachers.

Ruggiero appeared in recital once more in New York late in the following year (1930), but Olin Downes, while still acclaiming the youngster as the "greatest talent among all the youthful prodigies who have been discovered and trained to successful concert appearance in recent years," was forced to add that "Master Ricci has in some ways retrograded as a performer since the days when he made his New York debut with the Manhattan Symphony Orchestra in the Mecca Temple on October 20, 1929.

After this failure in New York, the lad was taken for a tour of Europe, first appearing in Berlin before an



audience which included such distinguished figures as Chancellor von Papen, Gerhardt Hauptmann, Professor Albert Einstein, and many other notables of the political and musical world. The Berlin correspondent of the New York Times reported, September 23, 1932, that the boy's reception had been "cordial rather than sensational."

On each of the two successive recitals Berlin audiences were increasingly sparse. Prague, Budapest, Paris, and Rome were included in his itinerary, and in each place he was met with indifferent success. In Rome he was feted and acclaimed, but this must be discounted because of the partiality of Italians for an Italian artist. Something, however, had happened to the boy whose star was once so bright. It was now very obvious that much of his earlier success was due to the expert teaching of Louis Persinger and Miss Lackey whom the courts had declared unfit mentors for the precocious lad.

On November 24, 1934 young Ricci was back in New York and gave a matinee recital at Carnegie Hall. According to Olin Downes in the New York Times of the following day:

"...the concert was on the whole a brilliant success....It gave reassuring proof that Ricci is not a talent lost to the world through unwise and unfair exploitation and the wrong kind of teaching as many supposed three years ago.... It is very good to say that in a large degree Master Ricci has come back..."

Since then he has given two or three concerts a year, each of which has confirmed Olin Downes' opinion that



young Ricci is a highly gifted but still unstable violinist. He is passing through the twilight zone between youth and manhood, but none now fear but what he will soon be a virtuoso. He returned to the tutelage of Louis Persinger and is regaining his zest and love for the violin. On October 15, 1938, he again played in Berlin and completely reversed the unfavorable impression he had made 6 years before. San Francisco's youngest prodigy has successfully weathered precocity.

Sources:

New York Times, October 21, 1929; September 23, 1932;  
November 25, 1934.



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FRANCES KARON

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Photo: Courtesy of Mrs. Frances Karon

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SADOWSKI, Reah, pianist (b. December 17, 1915, Winnipeg, Canada).

Reah's father was a concert violinist; her mother a pianist. In 1917 the family moved to San Francisco, at which time her inborn talent became apparent when she sang phrases of melody she had heard her father play upon the violin. This encouraged her mother to begin giving her piano lessons. In 1926 Reah became one of the most promising of the pupils of Adolph Ryss.

The following spring she was entered as one of 1800 contestants in an amazing piano tournament staged by the San Francisco Call-Bulletin. To discover the "champion pianist" of San Francisco, a whole series of elimination contests were held culminating in a finalist's competition on May 4, 1927, in the Civic Auditorium. Reah easily topped her own age division, 10- to 12-year-olds, and with a total of 95 out of a possible 100 points was second in the entire field, winning the second Grand Prize and the more tangible reward of a grand piano. The judges were Homer Henley, Wheeler Beckett, and Dr. Hans Leschke. The day following the concert, Redfern Mason of the San Francisco Examiner wrote:

"Reah played a Bach Invention for her principal number and played it with genuine Bach feeling."

After two more years of study with Adolph Ryss she made her debut on February 5, 1929 in the Scottish Rite Auditorium. Her program included Bach's Italian Concerto, Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, a Chopin group, and shorter



pieces by MacDowell and Liszt. All of the critics on the daily papers joined in commenting upon the difficulties of her program, relative to her age; and ease with which the difficulties were overcome, thanks to an extraordinary technical facility; the undeniable fact that her interpretations were not that of a fully matured artist; and the ameliorative effects of time and further study in fulfilling her great promise.

A period of study in the East followed. In 1929 she was awarded a scholarship with Isabel Vengerova at the Curtis Institute, and shortly after became a pupil of Alberto Jonas. In 1932 she received a piano fellowship with the Juilliard Foundation where she studied with Josef Lhevinne and Madame Rosina Lhevinne -- going with them abroad where she studied and played with the Roth Quartet. In 1933 the fellowship with Juilliard Foundation was renewed. During this time she received a thorough theoretical grounding in harmony, form, and composition.

In one New York concert she played Paderewski's Variations and Fugue on an original theme in honor of the Polish pianist-composer. "A great artist and a great talent in the making," was the comment of the great Pole. During 1933 and 1934 she studied with Milan Blanchet and it is he who has been Miss Sadowski's greatest influence and her most inspiring teacher.



In recent years, Miss Sadowski has devoted herself to concert work, teaching, and composition. In the latter field she studied under Julius Gold of San Francisco, and with Franklin Robinson and Antonio Lora of New York. Among her compositions is Cadiz (Ricordi Co. Ltd., London); Danse Espagnole (Ricordi Co. Ltd., London); and Three Preludes (pending publication by Universal, London).

In 1935, she toured the Middle West giving solo concerts, broadcasting, and appearing with major symphony orchestras. In the winter of that year she went to England where she filled many concert engagements and performed frequently with chamber groups. In Paris she had many private engagements. Her official London debut was in 1936, following which she became a regular featured soloist over the BBC.

In the fall of 1938, Miss Sadowski returned to America, making a tour of Canada. The war situation in Europe hindered her plans for returning there, and she chose San Francisco for her home pending further plans. She has two new works in hand at present: a large work for the piano and a work for string quartet. At present (1940), she is doing concert work and teaching.

Sources:

Interview with Miss Reah Sadowski, November 12, 1939;  
March 28, 1940.

San Francisco Examiner, May 5, 1927.



SLENCZYNSKI, Ruth, pianist (b. January 15, 1925, Sacramento, California).

An amazing child, Ruth Julia Slenczynski was the daughter of an even more amazing man. Most prodigies seem to have been happy accidents. The first signs of their precocity were greeted by parents with surprise more often than not. Ruth was a planned prodigy; her career appears to have resulted from a tour de force of sheer will power on the part of Josef Slenczynski.

Before the first World War he had been a moderately successful concert violinist, inordinately ambitious to win fame as a virtuoso. With an irony far from subtle, he emerged from the trenches with ambition and energy unabated but with a hand useless for violin playing. Born of his frustration was the idea of a vicarious career -- he would become the father of a child who would give expression to his genius and his ambitions. The idea was to become an obsession with him.

Deliberately he set about to find a suitable mother for his projected genius. It was not necessary that she be musical; he had talent enough, he thought, for two. In fact, a non-career woman was preferable, one who would be willing to cook, sew, and keep house, and leave the child's education in his hands. One thing was essential; his wife should be strong and healthy with well-formed wrists and hands. Unromantically he went about the business on Mendelian lines. By an incredible coincidence eugenics and romance were joined





when Josef found that a childhood sweetheart, Dorothy Hodgins Dorsey, had grown up to possess the desired characteristics. She proved quite willing to give up her New York job as stenographer to serve as Josef's assistant. Shortly after their marriage the young couple moved to Sacramento where Ruth was born. The father noted with satisfaction her strong, well-formed wrists and hands. All was going according to his plans. Against all probability, Ruth proved everything her father hoped for and more. Only one detail in the plan called for revision -- instead of a violinist he had produced a pianist.

Of all the prodigies Ruth was perhaps the most precocious. No publicity stories would be released picturing her as a healthy normal American girl. She detested dolls and her appetite for work was boundless. At a very early age her ambition matched her father's and she announced that she was going to become the world's greatest pianist.

Even as a baby she was eager to learn -- the positions on the violin; notes and letters; elementary harmony and form. At 2 she had a little toy piano; the absence of black keys really distressed her. Repeatedly she begged for "a big piano." She became sick, refused food and was put to bed by mystified parents and an equally mystified doctor. A lucky stroke enabled the very poor Slenczynskis to acquire a piano. Ruth recovered immediately and completely. Shortly afterward she progressed from little pieces to etudes and simple classical works under her father's instruction.



Friends hearing her urged Josef to allow Ruth to study with Mrs. Alma Schmidt-Kennedy of Mills College. Only reluctantly did he consent. Ruth was to be his creation alone. Eventually she studied for various periods with Mrs. Schmidt-Kennedy, Albert Elkus, Phyllida Ashloy, Gunnar Johansen, various teachers at the Curtis Institute, Johansen again, Egon Petri, Artur Schnabel, and Alfred Cortot. In later years a peculiar form of amnesia permitted Josef Slenczynska to announce himself as Ruth's sole instructor. Another idiosyncrasy of his memory concerned Ruth's birthday. For many of her early appearances her ages as given by her father seem the result of the hastiest estimates. This is all the more remarkable when one considers the child's actual accomplishments.

She was 3 when she began studying with Mrs. Schmidt-Kennedy at Mills College. She could read, even transpose at sight. Before she played a piece she liked to analyze it and have difficult points explained. To the explanation she would listen with eager, intelligent interest.

On May 10, 1929, she appeared in public for the first time, at Mills College where she played a Bach 2-part invention, Rameau's Tambourin and Mozart's Sonata in C major.

Her touch, her phrasing, her knowledge of just what she was doing, dumfounded the audience. All but Josef Slenczynski pressed congratulations on Mrs. Schmidt-Kennedy. Relations between the father and teacher were growing strained



because Josef insisted on being present at lessons. His interference became almost unbearable and it was with mixed feelings that Mrs. Schmidt-Kennedy learned that she was to lose her most brilliant pupil.

Albert Elkus, eminent pedagogue of the University of California had become interested in Ruth. After a few lessons he told the ever-present Josef: "I am not the person to teach your child." Diplomatically, he refused to enlarge upon this statement.

Weighing the child's talent against the father's interference, Mrs. Schmidt-Kennedy took Ruth back. There ensued an armed truce that could not last. Gunnar Johansen, younger and more resilient, took up the task. Through him Ruth met and conquered Mischa Elman who wrote of her enthusiastically to Josef Hofmann, about to visit San Francisco on a concert tour. Alfred Hertz had already written Hofmann urging that he do something for the child, but his letter had been ignored. Elman's reports made Hofmann waver. On arriving in San Francisco, he grudgingly consented to hear the child in his hotel suite provided he could remain in an adjoining room. From the 5-year-old's repertoire of 200 pieces a program of Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Grieg had been chosen. After her first number Hofmann came out of the inner room and sat on the piano bench beside Ruth as she played.



"The most talented child I've heard on my trip," was his verdict. Plans were made for Ruth to study at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Before she left, a concert was arranged at Erlanger's Columbia Theatre, March 16, 1930, at which Ruth repeated the program she had played for Hofmann. Of this concert -- at once a farewell to San Francisco and her local debut -- Alexander Fried wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle, March 17:

"At the age of 5, Ruth Slenczynski has already defined her personality sufficiently to demand recognition as a pianist....Her prodigiously precocious abilities were enthusiastically admired by a capacity audience....

"Her performances were dextrous, untroubled by technical difficulty and quite secure in their interpretative intent. Her understanding of music already includes appreciation of the timing of effect....When pauses or changes of pace were apt she rounded them out with clear judgment."

The Slenczynskis' experiences at the Curtis Institute were as much of a disappointment as the debut concert had been a success. Josef had taken it for granted that Hofmann would teach Ruth personally. He didn't. For 2 months Josef chafed in the apartment just outside the premises of the school which had been provided by special arrangement. Meanwhile an increasing number of complaints from neighbors came to the attention of officials of the Institute.

Tactfully at first and at last firmly Josef was told that Ruth was being forced to practice too long, inhumanly long. Incredulous, then wrathful, Slenczynski thundered





that his daughter's activities were his concern and his only. He rushed Ruth back to San Francisco and Gunnar Johansen.

Shortly after her return, Ruth was asked to play for the Belgian String Quartet by Richard Tobin. Tobin, president of the San Francisco Symphony Association and the city's leading music patron, had been interested in Ruth by Mrs. Schmidt-Kennedy. A number of famous musicians including Lhevinne and Mischa Elman were invited, as well as a few wealthy music lovers. They thought Ruth was wonderful and when Elman and Lhevinne agreed they were sure of it. Ruth should be sent to Cortot in Paris, said Lhevinne. Other teachers' claims were brought forth but all present imagined that European study was essential.

A fund of \$11,000 was raised to be budgeted at \$300 a month. Two years before, another fund raised to buy Ruth a grand piano had been returned to the donors without thanks: Josef feared they might feel the gift entitled them to dictate Ruth's future. "And only I," he was quoted in the San Francisco Call, September 2, 1934, "will dictate my child's career." With this made clear, he accepted the \$11,000 and the whole family left for Europe.

In Berlin Ruth studied with Egon Petri. He left for Warsaw. Artur Schnabel came next. Here was a will equal to Josef's. The Slenczynskis left for Paris. But not before Ruth, aged 6, had completely captivated the usually hypercritical Berliners. On November 25, 1931 she made her debut.



A letter from a San Franciscan who was present was quoted by Redfern Mason in the San Francisco Examiner, December 19, 1931:

"Bach Saal was simply packed, even to all the standing room and masses of people on the stage. The enthusiasm and applause were deafening at the end and the audience all standing and crowding up to the stage for encores and refusing to leave.

"In one night she suddenly rose to the position of one of the world's greatest artists."

Standing in the wings, smiling one of his rare smiles, Josef watched Ruth accept bouquet after bouquet; then over the footlights came a doll. The smile froze on Josef's face; he bounded out on the stage, seized the doll, threw it back into the audience, and angrily stalked back to the wings --these Berliners had no taste.

Paris proved more agreeable; Cortot must have had the patience of Job and the tact of a Talleyrand -- he was Ruth's teacher for a year. Again Mrs. Schmidt-Kennedy had been of invaluable aid; a former pupil of Cortot, it was she whose recommendation had overcome his reluctance to accept a prodigy although Ihevinne had written him saying the child was probably a genius. Hearing Ruth, Cortot had no reason to doubt it. Shortly after her arrival he arranged a recital for her with the Paris Symphony Orchestra, appearing himself as conductor.

Paris agreed with Berlin: the child was incredible. Her head barely topped the grand piano; from certain parts of the concert hall all that was visible of her were little legs



reaching for pedals raised half way to the top of the piano bench. And from this improbable source proceeded a tone big enough to fill the hall, to be heard above the great orchestral accompaniment, a tone to be envied by many full-grown virtuosos. Swiftmess and sweetness and sureness of taste Ruth had, perhaps in greater degree then than later.

A recital in the Champs-Elysee Theatre confirmed her position as one of the really great child artists. A third appearance broke the charm. Her second performance with the Paris Symphony Orchestra, at that time under Pierre Monteux, was poorly attended. It was the eleventh orchestral event in 3 days, and musical Paris was surfeited.

For some time, Charles Wagner, the American manager, had been urging Josef to bring Ruth to New York for an appearance he knew would be sensational. Wagner had had the good fortune to be in San Francisco when Ruth made her debut in 1930. In the semi-darkness of the Columbia Theatre he had come across a little gold mine and had mentally staked a claim.

Patiently he worked on Josef's pride and in the fall of 1933 joyfully received the news that Ruth was ready for her first tour. Eight years old, already poised and still unassuming, Ruth became the outstanding figure of the New York season. Three recitals brought forth columns of wonderment and praise. In a tone of comparative restraint the critic of Musical America, November 25, wrote:

"...young Miss Slenczynski's playing of the Nocturne in the Chopin group was extraordinary



for its almost uncanny revelations of musical qualities that were obviously innate and not merely the result of imitation....

"But the most astounding performance of the evening was that of the Winter Wind Etude that closed the program proper. Here speed was matched by impeccable cleanness and sureness of attack and an almost incredible sweep and vigor."

Besides the Chopin group, she played Bach's Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue, the Sonata in C minor, Opus 13 of Beethoven, and the Rondo Capriccioso of Mendelssohn. At her New York debut (Town Hall, November 13, 1933) and at her later recitals, the heavy program left her superabundant energies almost untapped and she went on to give a number of encores that was generous to say the least. Like a little machine wound up for a special series of actions, she would have continued until she ran down, had not her father and manager finally gotten her off the stage.

On New Year's Day 1934 Ruth played again in San Francisco. San Francisco's Opera House had been sold out days before. Society filled the boxes and her sponsors had taken blocks of seats. Before the first piece was finished they knew their \$11,000 had been an excellent investment. This child must play with the San Francisco Symphony! A concert was arranged under Molinari.

All went well except for some eccentric tempi forced on Molinari by the dominating little soloist. Then the thunderous applause put her back into motion and quest artist etiquette was shattered as she took an encore....and another





....and another! Richard Tobin coughed discreetly without getting her attention. Her father had a try; then her manager. Still she kept on while Molinari fumed back stage, put on his coat, threatened to leave, was coaxed to stay. As fresh as a waltzing mouse, Ruth was finally led off stage while an exhausted audience settled down to the rest of the symphony program.

Three years later Ruth again appeared with the San Francisco Symphony. At the conclusion of her concert, carefully coached attendants dashed from the wings and wrestled the piano off stage with almost frantic celerity, so strong was the fear that Ruth's generosity might again become uncontrollable.

At the conclusion of her first American tour she returned to Paris for further study. On February 15, 1934, the day she left New York, Charles Wagner told a reporter for the New York Times that she would return the following year for 30 concerts for which he guaranteed her \$75,000. This money, he said, would enable her to pay back her sponsors, continue her European education and play only "when all feel it the right time." He had Ruth under contract until she was 21 and free to choose her own manager. Until then, she would appear in concert for 3 months each season and study for 9.

For the first time Josef Slenczynski became her sole instructor in fact: he supervised her practice; he suggested details of nuance, tempi, phrasing, rhythm; he chose



new editions of her repertoire and built her recital programs. "She has improved 100% since last year," he told ship reporters when they returned to New York on January 6, 1935. On January 13, Ruth gave a recital. The next day Olin Downes of the New York Times reported:

"...with more than technique, she is apparently guided with less discretion than should be the case. She is neither a matured musician, interpreter, nor executant. She should be educated for more years before further public appearances. She is now undertaking tasks for which she is not intrinsically equipped."

This eminent critic admitted that the 10-year-old child's performance of the Chopin etudes was technically astonishing; occasional cantabile passages were played with lyrical charm and rare beauty of tone, but her rhythm was often astonishingly faulty. Particularly ominous, he felt, was that such a touchstone as a Mozart sonata should be the dullest, poorest, most mechanical of her efforts, spotted with blurred notes, probably due to fatigue.

Averaging two concerts a week, the child played her way across the continent. As Alexander Fried was to write when she reached San Francisco: "She fought the keyboard when she had big things to do with it; she won her fight." Most of the concert-goers who heard her were not overconcerned about niceties of interpretation; when she thundered through the terrific Paganini-Liszt Variations in the grand manner of the nineteenth century virtuosos, the public was sure she was a genius without worrying whether she was an artist; her tour was a great financial success.



In San Francisco, the audience that filled the Opera House on March 11, 1935 was dazzled by her amazingly precocious brilliance. People literally gasped as she swept down the keyboard in the Revolutionary Etude of Chopin. But Alfred Frankenstein wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle the next day:

"...the child lacks physical strength to play the piano as an artist plays it. This...accounts for her erratic rhythm and frequent technical slips.

"There is every reason to believe in time her musical understanding and her physical capacity will grow up to her present phenomenal memory and the amazing capability of her fingers. She is one of the white hopes for the future of the concert stage, but it is a consummation devoutly to be wished that now, and at all times in the future, her repertory will be limited to things she can really play."

This was substantially the judgment and hope of critics of the San Francisco News and San Francisco Examiner. Needless to say, the impatience of Josef's daemon could not be restrained: season after season Ruth continued to play works too big for her in too many concerts. Nor was her father content to creat merely a physical prodigy. When they returned to Europe in April 1935, Josef told reporters: "It is a mistake to talk to her as you would talk to an ordinary child. She has the mind of an adult."

Each year she improved in virtuosity; each year critics have noted the disappearance of some faults of interpretation; but each year her programs have been raised a



notch higher than she could hurdle artistically. In 1936 it was Beethoven's F minor Sonata that she was playing with a bewildering facility and a perfectly understandable lack of comprehension. In 1937, it was the Bach-Busoni Chaconne. The critic of the London Times may have been exaggerating when he said her concert of February 27, 1937 betrayed a complete lack of imagination, but the critic of the San Francisco Chronicle was not when he said her performance of the Saint-Saens Concerto under Monteux on December 18, 1937 showed she still had "worlds to conquer in the matter of nuance and phrasing and other elements of true virtuoso performance."

For this Josef Slenczynski can justly claim sole credit. The credulous have rumored he hypnotizes her "a la Svengali"; they point to his constant presence in the wings when she plays; like the possessor of a pianola which can be varied in expression by remote control, he makes Ruth play fast or slow, loud or soft. Obviously this is nonsense. But his supervision of her practice is constant and detailed. Where he does not correct, he approves the child's interpretation. She inherits his will, his energy, his aggressiveness, his seriousness: it is possible that part of her legacy is a lack of artistic taste.

And yet, in her earliest recitals critics pointed to an unerring sense of phrasing, an innate rhythm. Perhaps this was the mother's gift. Perhaps when Ruth has grown up and her will matches that of her father she may repudiate the





interpretations suggested by her sole instructor. Maybe her artistry will then match the mechanical facility undeniably developed by her relentless taskmaster and father.

Miss Slenczynski appeared at the Opera House, March 7, 1940, in a program for the benefit of the Finnish Relief Fund. Critics were impressed with her general improvements in interpretation, and noted that now, at 15, she was a mature artist, technically. Marjory Fisher, in the San Francisco News, March 8, seemed to see a new spirit of revolt in her general attitude -- in the way in which she pounded out the heavier passages. All have hope that the young artist is at a point in her development when she can and will assert her own independence, to the benefit of her artistry. The program included Schumann's Carnival-echoes of Vienna, a Chopin piano sonata, and a group of shorter works by Liszt and Josef Slenczynski.

Sources:

Interview with Alice Seckels, May 11, 1939.  
San Francisco Examiner, March 9, 17, 1930;  
 January 9, 19, 1934.  
San Francisco Chronicle, March 17, 1930; March 12, 1935.  
Musical America, March 25, 1930; January 25, 1938.  
New York Times, November 26, 27, 1931; January 3,  
 June 26, 1932; November 14, 26, December 9, 1933;  
 January 28, February 5, 16, March 1, 1934; January  
 7, 13, February 21, April 14, 1935; January 8, 19, 20,  
 October 25, November 1, 1936; January 12, February  
 27, October 24, 1937.  
Literary Digest, December 2, 1933.  
San Francisco News, January 8, 1934; March 8, 1940  
San Francisco Call-Bulletin, August 21, 1934.  
Musical Courier, March 15, 1939.  
San Francisco Chronicle, March 8, 1940.



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RUTH SLENCZYNSKI  
(With father, Josef Slenczynski)



Photo: Courtesy of Mr. Josef Slenczynski

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SMITH, Norman, pianist (b. 1908, San Francisco).

Norman's mother, who taught music, gave him his first piano lessons, but at the age of 6 he began to study with George Kruger with whom he remained for 10 years.

His first recital was given at Kohler and Chase Hall, March 18, 1914. There was no press comment upon this event, but of a public recital given May 29, 1919, the Pacific Coast Musical Review critic wrote:

"This wonderful musical genius has most abounding technic and stage poise in his rendering of compositions which to the average pianist contain difficulties only to be overcome by systematic study and practice."

After a later performance, the Pacific Coast Musical Review, July 2, 1921, wrote:

"The technical brilliance of this young prodigy was not the only one of his artistic surprises, for his interpretation revealed a certain intelligence one rarely notices among students of such youthful experience and appearance."

The young prodigy's professional debut was made at the Fairmont Hotel on February 16, 1926. The critic of the San Francisco Chronicle, February 16, wrote:

"...(he) would do better to play Mozart and Haydn sonatas, and smaller pieces of Mendelssohn and Schubert than such massive works as Beethoven's Sonata Op. 53 and the greater preludes and fugues of Bach."

Redfern Mason in the San Francisco Examiner the next morning said:

"There was an assurance about his playing, a definiteness of mental attitude one does not look for in a young fellow not yet out of his teens."



And of the playing of the Hungarian Fantasia of Liszt:

"...young Smith lapsed into the kapellmeister attitude. It was brilliant, astonishingly so for one so young; but it lacked imagination. I thought of Busoni's remark: 'That is Godowski or a pianola.'"

In 1927 he gave several recitals in the Civic Center Library Hall. He lives in New York at present, where he works in a bank, and plays the piano for recreation.

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, April 26, 1919;

July 2, 1921; January 1, 1922.

San Francisco Chronicle, February 16, 1926.

San Francisco Examiner, February 17, 1926.





SOLOVIEFF, Miriam, violinist (b. November 4, 1921, San Francisco). Parents: Aaron M. and Elizabeth (Homsy) Solovieff.

Miriam's father was born in Russia, of a strictly orthodox Jewish family. He studied the Talmud until he was 16, and his musical talent in singing eventually led him to his present position as assistant cantor of the Beth Israel synagogue in San Francisco. In 1914, as a young man of 21, he had been conscripted into the Russian Army; but he escaped to the United States, and came to San Francisco where he met and married another Russian émigré.

When she was 3 years old, the family lived in an apartment directly above the studio of a piano teacher, Ela Rittisin. Miriam earnestly listened to the students at their lessons, and soon made known her desire to make music herself. When Miss Rittisin heard of this she gladly gave the child a few lessons. In a few months she realized that the child had remarkable ability which called for greater teaching skill. Adolph Ryss, who had guided the early steps of several prodigies, became interested in Miriam and taught her for the next 3 years. As his pupil she appeared before various musical organizations, on one notable occasion, as a 5-year-old debutante in the junior section of the Pacific Musical Society.

On November 15, 1928, 8-year-old Ruggiero Ricci made a sensational debut in Scottish Rite Auditorium. In the audience was Miriam Solovieff who had just passed her eighth birthday. The child violinist's performance made a deep impression on her. For days afterward she heard in memory the



sustained legato singing of the violin and compared it mentally with the cooler detached voice of the piano. Soon she begged her parents to be allowed to change. They objected, and pointed out that she was doing unusually well with the piano. Eventually a compromise was reached. Miriam could have violin lessons but must continue her study of the piano.

For a year Miriam was a pupil of Robert Pollak, head of the violin department of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. When he left for Tokyo, the young violinist came into the able hands of Kathleen Parlow and her assistant Carol Weston, with whom she remained for 4 years.

Five years after her first appearance before the Pacific Musical Society as one of a group of children, Miriam again played for this organization. Although but 10 years old she was now a member of the senior section and her playing of the Bruch Concerto in G minor was the outstanding performance of the program. Among those present was Redfern Mason, dean of Pacific Coast critics, who said: "Miriam must be added to our little circle of San Francisco prodigies."

A few months later on December 17, 1931, she made her debut in the Community Playhouse, playing a Handel sonata, the Mendelssohn Concerto in E minor, the Bruch arrangement of Kol Nidrei, and a group of short pieces. Her list of sponsors resembled a "Who's Who of San Francisco Patrons of Music." The concert was a pronounced success. According to the San Francisco Examiner, December 18, Miriam displayed an ingenuous



and candid delight in the financial success of the recital and told the reviewer that she would like to earn plenty of money so that she could buy a "real" violin.

In the San Francisco Chronicle of December 27, 1931, Alexander Fried wrote:

"...(she) convinced a large audience that with the passing of years she will become an exceptionally fine violinist.

"She is precocious in musical address as well as in technical ability. Her tone is well controlled and variable to expressive purpose."

A few months later Miriam made her first appearance with an orchestra when she played with the San Francisco Symphony on the occasion of the fourth Young People's Symphony concerts, conducted by Basil Cameron, February 26, 1932, in the Tivoli Theatre. Her interpretation of two movements of Lalo's Symphonie Espagnole was judged by Alexander Fried as "remarkably able and just"; and Homer Henley, who had heralded her as a possible genius two weeks before, wrote in the Argonaut, March 4, 1932:

"Nine-year-old Miriam Solovieff appeared to better advantage with the orchestra than she did at her recent concert. It may not amount to genius but none the less hers was an extraordinary performance for a child of nine."

Or for a child of 11, which Miriam actually was. (Fried had given her age as 8 and for several years no two accounts agreed on her age).

Miriam's study continued with Parlow and Weston. When Dr. Artur Rodzinsky heard her play, he invited her to be



a soloist at one of the regular concerts of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. He is quoted in the San Francisco Chronicle, February 5, 1933, as writing:

"Never in my musical experience have I heard any child who offers such wonderful possibilities for the future. She has so much already --tone, technique, understanding--that I qualify her without hesitation as a matured artist now and it was on this basis that I selected her to play with the Philharmonic.

"The fact that her personality is that of a normal healthy child enhances her genius as a musician."

After a successful Los Angeles appearance Miriam's parents decided that she should go East to study with Louis Persinger who had gained extraordinary prestige as the teacher of Yehudi Menuhin and Ruggiero Ricci. In order to secure sponsors for Miriam, Mrs. Philip Bush of San Francisco arranged a private recital in the home of Mrs. Sydney Ehrman. It was attended by a number of patrons prominent in San Francisco musical life and was successful in its purpose. Mrs. I. Golden, Mrs. Ernest Sultan, Mrs. E. S. Heller, Mrs. Walter Heller, and the Haas family responded with donations of \$1000 each and in September 1933, Miriam, her mother, and her baby sister left for New York, where she began study with Louis Persinger, which continued until 1937.

During a brief return visit to California in 1934 she appeared in August with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Gabrilowitsch, in a summer concert in the Hollywood Bowl.





No other noteworthy performance is recorded until her debut in Town Hall, New York, January 3, 1937. The New York Times, January 4, stated:

"Miriam Solovieff...made her local debut in a recital last night in Town Hall. Her playing possessed sufficient warmth, vitality and technical address to evoke a ready and strenuous response from her many hearers. Though only 15, she seemed thoroughly at home on the concert platform and played with the poise of a veteran of the bow."

After some detailed criticism, mainly concerned with the lack of contrast in her reading of a Brahms sonata, the review continued:

"At its best in broad cantilena, Miss Solovieff's tone lost quality in rapid passage work...In her desire to produce a full tone in the higher positions Miss Solovieff, through too great pressure of her strong fingers and too forceful bowing, drew tones from the strings that were often strident and tonally sullied. Nor had the tone the refinement needed for a completely satisfactory rendition."

"But this was the playing of a truly talented musician, more than ordinarily rich in promise. There were many moments of beauty and deeply felt poetry in her performance and always a sensitiveness to contour of phrase and a glow and verve that could not fail to make their impression. With further experience and study Miss Solovieff should make her mark in the musical world."

It was to Europe and the internationally famous Carl Flesch that Miriam turned for further study. After a year's study with Flesch, Miriam went on a tour of Holland, making her debut at The Hague, November 21, 1938. Success there and in Amsterdam, November 23, led to an engagement to play the



Mendelssohn Concerto with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, December 26.

Shortly before this engagement she made her London debut, December 15, drawing a capacity audience to Wigmore Hall. The enthusiasm she aroused on this occasion led to 22 engagements in England from January to March 1939. A criticism in the London Times, December 17, reported:

"Neither Brahms' D minor Sonata, with Mr. Gerald Moore's valuable aid, nor Bach's Chaconne, without it, suggested a fully awakened sense of style, or even a very lively regard for the finer points of interpretation, but gifts of temperament and an unusual technical development were remarked in both performances....As it was, Glazunov's A minor Concerto served best to display an admirable tone production and a measure of skill and animation well above the average."

Of the many artists who present concerts in London, only a few achieve the honor of a review in the Times. The cautious, qualified praise of the above review represents honestly won approval. Miriam continued her study with Flesch until late in 1939, when because of the war, she returned to America where she will shortly (1940) be heard in a recital.

Sources:

Interviews with Aaron Solovieff, March, November, 1939.  
San Francisco Examiner, December 13, 18, 1931;  
February 27, 1932; December 22, 1936.  
San Francisco Chronicle, December 27, 1931; February  
27, 1932; February 6, 1933.  
Argonaut, March 4, 1932.  
New York Times, January 4, 1937.  
London Times, December 17, 1939.



STENZEL, Alma, pianist (b. June 28, 1888, Washington, D. C.).  
 Parents: Sigismund and Martha Stenzel.

Perhaps the most brilliant of all the young musicians to come out of San Francisco around the turn of the century was the pianist Alma Stenzel. An exceedingly modest and coolly capable pianist, she was never spoken of as a precocious prodigy despite her youth. Her entire life, career, and pianistic ability illustrated a foundation of solid character. Much of this may have been due to the excellence of her early training with Hugo Mansfeldt, piano mentor and choral master extraordinary; with whom she began study at the age of 8.

On October 12, 1899, she appeared in recital before a large audience at Sherman Clay Hall. The Pacific coast heard her in a half dozen concerts before she went East and to Europe, never to return. Town Talk followed her early career most enthusiastically, and the whole of her California life is summed up in the edition of May 1900:

"Alma Stenzel gave two piano recitals in the interior of the state last week -- one in Sacramento on Wednesday evening and one in Stockton on Thursday afternoon. Both of these events were distinct successes and their result from a financial and artistic standpoint proved exceedingly gratifying....The more I listen to Alma Stenzel the more I am obliged to admire the remarkable force of her attack and the virile character of her playing. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how one so tender of age is able to apply the vigor of an adult to her interpretation. Naturally this iron muscular development assists Alma Stenzel greatly in the clearness and fluency of her technique, and that her technical equipment is wonderfully complete must be acknowledged when the spontaneity of her chords, the clearness of her runs,



the brilliancy of her arpeggios, the delicacy and firmness of her touch are watched with care. ....Her intelligence is particularly evident in her Liszt numbers, from which composer she does not select the technical acrobatics or neck-breaking racing pieces which our celebrated virtuosi love to throw at us, but the little student chooses the more emotional and romantic works of Liszt such as Hark, Hark, the Lark and The Nightingale, which require all the daintiness of conception and cleverness of execution with which a fertile brain may be able to invest them.

"Unlike other so-called 'wonder children' she does not believe she knows it all, nor do her parents allow her to support the family, nor is she dragged from one end of the country to the other and exhibited as a musical freak.... I sincerely hope that Alma Stenzel will not, like so many other prodigies, forget that she owes to Hugo Mansfeldt all her present accomplishment and that, thanks to his generosity and almost fatherly interest, she has attained an artistic prominence but seldom enjoyed by children."

The next 10 years were a succession of triumphs for the sweet-faced, golden-haired girl. During the summer of 1900, when only 12, she played at the fashionable watering places of the East -- but Saratoga, Newport, Lake Mohonk, and the Waldorf-Astoria were only stepping stones. At Saratoga, mecca of only the greatest artists, as high as \$50 each was paid for tickets to hear her. Several wealthy easterners offered financial help that she might complete her studies abroad. One she accepted, after refusing a contract of \$1000 a month for 6 months of concert touring.

In the autumn of that year, with her mother and a younger sister, Marguerite, a violin prodigy, she sailed for







Europe. While on board Miss Stenzel was asked to give a concert for the benefit of the seamen's fund. The concert so pleased her fellow passengers that more than \$800 was subscribed, which the captain insisted on sharing with the little pianist.

In the middle of October Alma Stenzel reached a strange land, the city of Vienna. She went to the greatest teacher in Vienna, Leschetizky, for a course of lessons, but as that gentleman was too busy, he farmed her out to one of his pupils. She saw Leschetizky himself only once, and that not for long. The girl wrote to her aunt in San Francisco: "America is not the only country for fakes. The sub-instructor gave me four lessons, and I found she could not teach me anything, so I dropped her. Did you ever hear of such a fake? I haven't paid for those four lessons, and won't if I can help it."

Soon she was playing in the homes of the city's elite and making many friends. Alexander Rose, the famous impresario, heard of her, heard her play, and wanted her to tour through Austria and Hungary under his direction, but first to make her debut in Vienna with Jan Kubelik, then 20 years old and the most famous young violinist in Europe. Such a magnificent offer could not be denied, and 2 months later her name had reached the man in the street, her photograph graced every shop window. She was to be accompanied by an orchestra of 50 pieces, composed of the best musicians in



Vienna. At the first rehearsal she won the enthusiastic admiration of Herr Komzek, the leader; at the end of the rehearsal he threw down his baton and applauded, while the musicians rose in their seats and shouted, "Bravo!"

The opening concert was given January 7, 1901, in the Vienna Opera House, which had a seating capacity of 3000; and several days before the performance not one of the 3000 seats were available and standing room was at a premium. She played the Litolff Concerto Symphonique in D minor, and her success was instantaneous. She captured the house. The enthusiasm was hardly less than that accorded Kubelik.

In Budapest she received a still more clamorous reception, for her fame had spread before her. Fashionable society made a fad of her; she was Fortune's darling of the hour. The San Francisco girl, unknown 6 months before, was now besieged by offers. Her mother chose to take her to Berlin, the capital of pianistic music.

On different occasions Alma Stenzel had played privately for some of the greatest and most distinguished pianists of the day, including Sauer, Paderewski, Rosenthal, Carreno, and DePachmann, all of whom acclaimed the girl as one possessed of superlative gifts.

Under the management of Hugo Wolff she made her Berlin debut in Beethovensaal on October 26, 1901, playing the Concerto in E minor by Emil Sauer and the Liszt Concerto in E flat major, accompanied by the Philharmonic Orchestra.



Her first teacher, Hugo Mansfeldt, came from San Francisco to be present at his pupil's triumph, which he felt to be his own. He continued as her teacher, traveling with her while she toured through Europe. The German Times, November 11, 1901, records her Berlin success:

"Since the famous days of Otto Hegner, Josef Hofmann, and Paula Szalit, we have not had here a youthful pianistic prodigy so ripe in performance, so rich in promise as little Alma Stenzel, who gave a concert last week, with orchestra, at Beethovensaal....

"Several things about the playing of the girl were not relative, however; for instance, her absolute memory, and her modulation of tone, two gifts that come from Above, and can hardly be acquired by the most assiduous practice, or the greatest talent for imitation. To play in one evening Sauer's Concerto in E minor, five difficult solos, and then Liszt's Concerto in E flat, is a feat of memory which has never before been equalled by any other child-pianist.

"Her fingers have been well trained, and what they might lack now in absolute precision and clarity, Miss Stenzel will easily acquire with time and industry. Her scales are fleet and smooth, her octaves little less than astounding, and her chords amazingly sonorous for one so young. At times her passage-work should have been more robust. It is no easy matter to be heard above, or even with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

"The Liszt concerto showed the little pianist at her very best. Here were united all those qualities which, singly, had been apparent in the group of solo pieces. And added to these, she has also no small degree of temperament. Of fatigue there was not a trace.

"With her audience, Miss Stenzel had smooth sailing. They showered her with applause, and at the end, with encores and flowers. She richly deserved them all.



"A trait so often absent from precocious children, and one which I admired extremely in Miss Stenzel, is her utter freedom from all affectation. She seems as modest as she is talented."

On April 19, 1902, she made her London debut at St. James Hall, and it, too, was a phenomenal success. She then returned to Berlin where she lived quietly and studied for more than a year. Another European tour with Jan Kubelik followed, during which she was heard in Vienna, numerous cities in Austria-Hungary, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Kiev, and Warsaw. There was more study in Vienna and in 1907, another series of concerts in London at Steinway Hall.

One of Alma Stenzel's most treasured possessions was the autograph of Paderewski, obtained from him at their first meeting in San Francisco when she was 12. It was just after one of his recitals that she was introduced to him. Paderewski, tired and worn from the strain of a 2-hour concert, instantly took an interest in the young pianist. He sat down and listened while she played a long program for him, and when she had finished he gave her compliments that would have turned the head of any young artist who possessed a less evenly balanced sense of values.

Miss Stenzel now lives in London and has been inactive for many years. Her principal recreation is walking tours through the mountains.

Sources:

Town Talk, San Francisco, May, September 3, 1900;  
January 4, 1902.  
Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, California, May, 1900.  
German Times, Berlin, November 11, 18, 1901.  
Musical Courier, March 19, 1902.  
San Francisco Bulletin, April 20, 1902; July 3, 1904.  
London Daily Telegraph, January 31, 1907.





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RUTH SLENCZYNSKI

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Photo: Courtesy of Paul Posz

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STERN, Florence, violinist (b. January 14, 1908, San Francisco) Parents: Joseph and Frieda Stern.

As a child, Florence Stern loved to wander through her father's pawnshop inspecting the kaleidoscopic array of secondhand articles that filled the room. She made up little stories about the comedy and tragedy behind each article that had found its way there.

One day, at the age of 5, she found a half-size violin, and from its one taut string drew a tone of surprising purity. The little girl claimed it for her own, and after it had been reconditioned she was able to play every tune that came to her ears. Amazed and delighted, her parents took her to Sigmund Anker, the well-known developer of prodigies, who immediately acclaimed her as one possessed with the spark of genius.

For 6 years she studied with him, and on January 24, 1918, at the age of 11, she made her debut in the Scottish Rite Hall. The Pacific Coast Musical Review of January 4, 1919, stated:

"Florence is only a little over ten years old. Her fingers are tiny, nevertheless she plays technically so clean that hardly any fault can be found with her. She memorizes extraordinarily difficult things, but above all, does not play like a parrot. She plays intelligently and phrases in a manner considerably above the average children of her years. She has been trained properly by her teacher, Sigmund Anker, who has reason to feel gratified with the result."

Then came other successes. She played for Leopold Godowsky who honored her by playing the Bruch Concerto with



her. She gave a recital in Montrocal, Canada, in May 1920, scoring a distinct triumph. The press was more than enthusiastic in their praise of her talents and big things were predicted for her. On April 30, 1922, she made her debut in New York at Carnegio Hall. The Musical America of May 6 was very kind:

"Little Miss Stern showed ability and there was much that was admirable in her playing, especially in the quieter movements. At present, as might be expected, she shows no conception of the spiritual or the emotional side of her art. Her playing as a whole was that of a talented child."

Thereafter, she won a scholarship with Leopold Auer and studied with him during 1923. She played at Maison Gaveau, Paris, June 11, 1924, and in Berlin that same year. Returning to this country, she appeared in Town Hall, April 4, 1925. This concert was reviewed in the New York Times of the next day as follows:

"Florence Stern, talented young American violinist, gave her third New York recital at the Town Hall last evening and demonstrated her possession of an excellent technic, joined to an emotional and imaginative temperament. She has precision and power. Her climaxes and finales are worthy of special notice."

Sources:

Pacific Coast Musical Review, January 4, 1919.  
San Francisco Chronicle, January 27, 1918.  
Musical America, May 6, 1922.  
New York Times, April 5, 1925.



STERN, Isaac, violinist (b. July 21, 1920, Kremienietz, Poland).  
Parents: Solomon and Clara (Jaffe) Stern.

Isaac Stern's birthplace has for centuries been a storm center of attack and counter-attack as Liths, Poles, and Russians have contended for its possession.

In 1919, among the civil service secretaries in the City Hall of Kremienietz was Solomon Stern, who had gone through the World War as a Russian soldier. He had been educated as a civil engineer and architect and was a graduate of an art school and a school of commerce. Late in 1919 he married a young girl whose childhood had been spent in a Viennese convent. She had come back to Russia to study piano and singing, winning a scholarship with Glazunov at the Petrograd Conservatory.

By July 1920 Kremienietz was once more a battle center. Its 200-year-old houses had been built to serve as fortresses and when Isaac was born, doctor and nurse were forced to remain in the besieged Stern home for 2 days because Polish and Bolshevik troops battled in the streets below.

Like many another Russian family in the days of the Revolution, the Sterns decided to go to America. They arrived in New York in 1921, continuing immediately to San Francisco, where Isaac spent a normal childhood.

At the age of 6, Isaac began the study of piano under the direction of his mother. His progress was that of a very apt, but not unusual pupil. A friend of his was learning to play the violin and his accomplishments aroused in







Isaac a spirit of emulation. Mrs. Roy Stovel, prominent on Music Week committees, started him off on the instrument and with such good effect that in February 1929 he was awarded a scholarship by the San Francisco Conservatory for study with the head of the violin department, Robert Pollak. Isaac's talent was so evident that at the end of the 20-week period of the scholarship it was renewed for an indefinite period. When Pollak left for Tokyo, his successor, Nathan Abas, became Isaac's teacher.

On April 28, 1931, San Francisco's musical public was first made aware that a new and authentic prodigy was developing. Contrary to the usual conservatory practice of presenting pupils in a group, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music sponsored Isaac Stern in full solo program. Sorosis Hall was filled to capacity and the audience roundly applauded the 10-year-old violinist's interpretations of a Bach sonata, the D minor Concerto of Wieniawski, Corelli's La Folia Variations, and two Pugnani-Kreisler numbers. "In a program requiring mature understanding he showed remarkable musical temperament," wrote Alexander Fried in the San Francisco Chronicle, April 29, 1931.

The following year, after continued study with Abas, Isaac played a more ambitious program at his first professional concert, March 24, 1932 at the Community Playhouse. His strong, fine tone, the range of his coloring, and maturity of conception once more won the praise of the press. In

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The following... (The text continues with faint, illegible notes or a list.)

The following... (The text concludes with faint, illegible notes or a list.)

the words of Alexander Fried, in the San Francisco Chronicle, March 25, he "proved he belongs to the higher order of precocious talents," although his confident and expert handling of bravura works "still needs polish."

In order to obtain the needed polish, Isaac went to New York to work with Louis Persinger. Through 1932 and the early months of 1933 Isaac worked hard. He was aware of how much Persinger had to give but his parents had not been able to come to New York with him and the pull of homesickness became too much for the 12-year-old boy. He returned to San Francisco and became the pupil of Naoum Blinder who had just been chosen concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony.

Two years of intensive study prepared him for his next concert consisting entirely of numbers calling for the technique of a virtuoso. On February 25, 1935 a large audience in the Veterans' Auditorium realized that Isaac Stern was no longer a prodigy. This realization was best phrased by Arthur Frankenstein in the San Francisco Chronicle, February 26:

"...for all intents and purposes he is already an arrived artist. He is certainly the most exceptional prodigy I have heard since the debut of Menuhin and he measures up to the Menuhin standard in practically every respect."

This was strong praise but no one who had been in the audience that night would have felt it over-enthusiastic. The concert began with a Bach double concerto for violins, a bold stroke, for it enabled the audience to make an immediate comparison between its two executants, the boy, Isaac Stern



and his teacher, the acknowledged artist, Naoum Blinder. The pupil did not suffer by the comparison. "His virtuosity is daring," wrote Alexander Fried of his performance of the rather shoddy Ernst Concerto in F sharp minor. Though Marjory Fisher of the San Francisco News noted a few false notes and falterings in some of the most difficult passages she was of the opinion that: "...only a small fraction of the virtuosi who chose to program these works approach them with the musician-ship of Isaac Stern."

After further study with Blinder, Isaac made his first appearance with orchestra playing the Bruch G minor Concerto with the Sacramento Municipal Orchestra, December 7, 1935. This served as experience to prepare him for his San Francisco debut with orchestra on February 18, 1936, when he played the Saint-Saens Concerto for Violin in B minor with the San Francisco Symphony conducted by William Van den Burg.

The following day the critics again filled their columns with praise. Frankenstein wrote:

"His playing is the work of a young man who plays like a house afire, a dry wooden house caught aflame in a high gale.

"The moment Stern's bow hooked into the striding intervals with which Saint-Saens opened his third violin concerto, one understood that something exceptional was going to happen. The movement, launched in dramatic tumultuous vein, continued its course with the utmost brilliance, zest and clarity..."

Of his recital March 18, 1936, Fried commented that "the impression he made with the symphony was even improved."



A year later he again appeared with the San Francisco Symphony playing the Brahms Concerto, and playing it magnificently. A Vancouver impresario was present and immediately arranged for five concerts for the fall. Meanwhile Isaac joined the American concert pianist Henri Deering in presenting a sonata recital at the Community Playhouse on May 11, 1937. Playing sonatas of Beethoven, Brahms, and Richard Strauss, the young violinist demonstrated that he had the musicianship necessary for ensemble playing as well as the brilliant technique of the solo virtuoso.

When he was 17, Isaac made his New York debut in the Town Hall, October 10, 1937. Because he appeared as a young artist and not as a prodigy, and because his powers had the fully ripened, his debut was successful but not sensational. Francis D. Perkins of the Herald Tribune, wrote:

"While not a showy performer he was yet able to give an impression of brilliance as well as of digital mastery."

In the New York Times, Olin Downes stated:

"...he plays with clean and manly intent...he pleased a large audience by the extent of his technique and his spirited, straightforward playing."

The cautious Musical America commented, October 25:

"...his technique, though as yet it can scarcely be called transcendental, is fluent and equal to the demands of the usual program..."

"Mr. Stern achieved a definite success. He seems to be a violinist of parts who will be heard with increasing interest."







This cautious prophecy was easily fulfilled for the same magazine published in its issue of March 10, 1938 a considerably warmer review when Isaac Stern returned to Town Hall playing a Brahms sonata, a Bach partita, Chausson's Poeme, Paganini's Caprice No. 15, and Novacek's Perpetuum Mobile. Of this concert Musical America said:

"Mr. Stern...returned this year with an excellent though formidable program which gave him an opportunity to reveal technical and musical gifts of a high order. There was in everything he played an earnestness and intensity which were the marks of fine musicianship. And to bear these qualities out, Mr. Stern had a full, red-blooded tone and a brilliant technique."

Since then, Isaac Stern has been touring the United States as a concert artist.

#### Sources:

Interview with Solomon Stern, March, 1939.  
San Francisco Examiner, February 2, 1929; April 26, 29  
1931; March 20, 1932; February 26, 1935; March 19,  
1936; May 12, 1937.  
San Francisco Chronicle, April 29, 1931; March 25,  
1932; February 26, 1935; February 19, 1936; May  
12, 1937.  
San Francisco News, February 26, 1935.  
News Letter, San Francisco, December 7, 1935.  
New York Times, October 11, 1937.  
New York Herald Tribune, October 11, 1937.  
Musical America, October 25, 1937; March 1938.



TOBENKIN, Philip, violinist (b. September 13, 1920, Oakland, California). Parents: Harry and Frances Tobenkin.

As one of the youngest prodigies of the Bay area and one who has yet to receive formal recognition, Philip Tobenkin is still studying with Sigmund Rader and is going to school.

When he was 20 months old his parents, of Russian and Jewish descent, discovered that the baby could tell the names of 100 phonograph records he had heard. At the age of 5 he began violin instruction with Miss Agnes Klegg, with whom he studied 6 months, until she left for New York to continue her own studies. The boy then went to Miss Natalie Bigelow and remained with her more than 3 years, learning the Leopold Auer method of playing. He also took conducting for a year.

In 1930 the promising boy was taken to Sigmund Rader, who began the boy's instruction all over again in his own style. Study with Rader has continued for 9 years. He was presented by Alice Metcalf in his first recital at the Women's Club in Oakland, May 24, 1933, playing Handel's Sonata in A major, and the Vivaldi-Nachez Concerto in A minor. The Oakland Post-Enquirer of the following day was cautious:

"A pupil of Sigmund Rader, young Tobenkin gave evidence of careful and painstaking study as well as impressive native talent. Just now his playing lacks variety and depth of emotion. But what is more important, he has a keen ear which does not permit inaccuracies of pitch, and a solid technical foundation. Interpretative values will undoubtedly be strengthened with maturity."



In 1934 he won the Music Week contest for young violinists, and made his first appearance in San Francisco at the Veterans' Auditorium, May 21, 1936. The San Francisco Chronicle reported the following morning:

"Philip Tobenkin, 15-year-old violinist, added his name to the list of San Francisco's musical young hopefuls with a recital last night at the Veterans' Auditorium. Tested against Mendelssohn's concerto, his talent assayed respectably high. His tone was notably sweet and smooth, although not as large as it probably will be in time.

"There was a decided show of brilliance in the technical passages, and while one felt the boy had taken an assignment rather too large for his present stage of development, there was also reason to believe that with further study something distinctly worth while will emerge. His work at present should be directed toward greater sureness in intonation and deeper understanding of what composers mean by their phrase markings."

Tobenkin won another contest in the Young Artist Series of the Federal Music Project in 1937 and was selected to give two recitals. One was given February 10, 1938; in the other he was to appear as soloist with Alfred Hertz and the Federal Symphony Orchestra, but because of the sudden illness of Mr. Hertz this did not take place. In March of 1937 he played over the radio on a coast-to-coast NBC hookup.

Sources:

Oakland Tribune, May 7, 1933.

Oakland Post-Enquirer, May 25, 1933.

San Francisco News, May 4, 1936.

San Francisco Chronicle, May 22, 1936.

Interview with Sigmund Rader and Philip Tobenkin,  
January 15, 1940.



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YASUKO AND AKIKO TAKAKUWA

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Photo: Courtesy of Catherine B. Swint

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### ADDITIONAL PRODIGIES.

AUSTRIA, Rebecca, pianist (b. August 16, 1928, Philippine Islands). Parents: Paul and Asuncion Austria.

Began study at age of 6 with Malen Burnett, her present teacher. Debut at the Community Playhouse, December 1, 1938. The San Francisco News, December 2, wrote: "...proved to have a facile technique, a good tone and sense of what the music was all about. In short, demonstrated talent of sufficient quantity and caliber to justify sponsorship which will assume the continuance of her musical education."

#### Sources:

Interview with Mrs. Asunción Austria, February 1940,  
San Francisco Chronicle, December 2, 1938.  
San Francisco News, December 2, 1938.

BIEBESHEIMER, Evelyn, pianist, organist (b. September 21, 1906, San Francisco). Parents: Julius and Martha Biebesheimer. Married: John Potasz, June 21, 1932; children, Jean Marie, John Douglas, and Joan Frances.

Evelyn's father, a natural musician, was a wood-carver by profession. She began her musical studies at the age of 10 with Catherine B. Swint with whom she remained for 6 years. Following this, she had 4 years work with Elsie Cook Hughes; and a year of organ study with Warren Allen of Stanford University. Miss Biebesheimer accompanied Yehudi Menuhin in an early concert, and Harvey Peterson with the San Francisco Symphony. On December 4, 1923, she appeared in a joint recital with Frances Wiener at the Fairmont Hotel. She is now (1940) engaged as organist at the Star of the Sea Church.

#### Sources:

Interview with Mrs. Potasz, March 29, 1940.

BOISSEVAIN, Francis, violinist (b. September 18, 1921, Ross, California).

Francis had musical ancestors on both sides of his family: his father being from a French-Dutch line, and his mother from early Virginia stock. He graduated from high school in 1938 during which year he passed an audition test for a Curtis Scholarship. It was decided that he stay in San Francisco, however, to study with Isabel Stovel.



He has been an active member of the Junior Auxiliary of the Pacific Musical Society and the San Francisco Junior Musical Society since 11. Francis is particularly interested in the works of such moderns as Debussy, Milhaud, Ravel, Heifetz, and Joseph Achron. In his repertoire are: the Bach Double Concerto, the Wieniawski Concerto No. 2 in D minor, Mozart's Concerto No. 5, Bruch's Concerto in G minor, and other major works for the violin. He has studied string quartet work with Raymond Pittenger and Frederick Zech; and orchestra work with Raymond Pittenger, William Knuth, William Van den Burg, and Giulio Silva. He has also had piano study. He made his debut at the age of 9, in the annual Music Week contest, May 1931, winning first place in his age group. His public appearances have been numerous, including several performances over the radio. The critic of the Napa Daily Register, reviewing his appearance with the local symphony, wrote (May 20, 1934): "Francis is proof of the fact that genius, discovered early in life, develops in great strides." At present (1940), he is a music major at the San Francisco State College.

Sources:

Material from Francis Boissevain, April 1, 1940.  
San Rafael Independent, San Rafael, California,  
May 1931.  
Napa Daily Register, Napa, California, May 20,  
1934.  
Musical West, April 8, 1934.

CUSIMANO, Giuseppe, violinist (b. 1927, New York).

The Cusimano family came to the Bay area in 1932. The boy studied with Beth Lackey Barron while attending school in Oakland. His debut, in the Veterans' Auditorium, April 22, 1935, was reviewed in the next day's San Francisco Chronicle by Alfred Frankenstein: "The boy has magnificent talent, perhaps even genius. The most difficult problems scarcely seem to exist for him." He gave a violin recital at the Oakland Women's City Club, in December 1938. Included in the program were two rarely heard selections: Schubert's Fantaisie in five movements, and Ravel's Kaddisch.

Sources:

San Francisco Chronicle, April 23, 1935.  
San Francisco Call-Bulletin, December 10, 12, 1938.



FARRINGER, Barbara, pianist (b. November 2, 1925, Alameda, California). Parents: Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Farringer.

Pupil of Lev Shorr. Barbara won the Oscar Weil Scholarship in 1937; and made her debut at the Women's City Club, Oakland, February 21, 1938.

Sources:

Interview with Lev Shorr, February 13, 1940.

FERNANDEZ, Esther, pianist (b. November 30, 1924, Oregon). Parents: Frank and Sarah Fernandez.

Esther is a pupil of Lev Shorr, and has spent all but the first 5 months of her life in San Francisco. Her debut, May 25, 1939, was at the Century Club. The San Francisco News, May 26, wrote that she had: "...extraordinary power, clear-cut technique, and plenty of temperament..."; while the critic of the San Francisco Chronicle, May 26, said: "...but she has a spark worth kindling, as was most obvious in her presentation of the very elaborate Siloti arrangement of the Bach 'Chaconne'..." Esther speaks several languages.

Sources:

Interview with Lev Shorr, February 13, 1940.

San Francisco News, May 26, 1939.

San Francisco Chronicle, May 26, 1939.

HIGH, III, Alexander Z., pianist (b. May 5, 1919, San Francisco). Parents: Alexander Jr. and Ruth High.

Started piano with Mrs. Bessie D. Kruger, his only teacher, at the age of 4. Showed definite signs of musical ability at an early age. Made radio debut on KPO when less than 6 years old. Played continuously before the public from that time on. Won three prizes in 1926 at the Boys' Achievement Club contests; was one of 24 winners in the 1800 entries of the first piano-playing contest held in San Francisco. Formal debut, January 28, 1932, at the St. Francis Hotel, including on his program: Bach's Inventions, No. 1 and No. 8; Beethoven's Rondo, Opus 51, No. 1; six Chopin pieces and various shorter works. Charles Wakefield Cadman, impressed at the recital, wrote to the boy: "You have a big start towards making an outstanding pianist." Of Alexander's appearance on April





25, 1932, at the annual convention of California Federation of Musical Clubs, held in Stockton, Redfern Mason wrote in the next day's San Francisco Examiner: "Here is genuine talent."

Sources:

Interview with Mrs. Bessie D. Kruger, January 22, 1940.

San Francisco News, January 28, 1932.

San Francisco Examiner, April 25, 1932.

LIND, Mildred, violinist (b. October 15, 1926, San Francisco).  
Parents: Waldemar and Nellie Lind.

Mildred's musical study began with her father, for many years a member of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. After several informal appearances at the age of 10, she appeared as soloist in San Jose, Van den Burg conducting. Appeared November 29, 1938, in Portland, Oregon, playing Beethoven's Sonata in F major and the Sibelius Concerto. Was guest soloist in Stern's Grove, July 24, 1939. Her formal debut, Town Hall, New York, November 15, 1939, was reviewed by Musical America, November 25: "Miss Lind bids fair to become a good violinist. The Franck Sonata and the Sibelius Concerto are works to tax the ability of the...experienced virtuoso, and although Miss Lind did not delve into the deeper significance of either work, she did perform them with conviction, strength and surety." Was winner of an Oscar Weil Scholarship, 1937. At present (1940), continuing her studies in New York.

Sources:

San Francisco Board of Education, February 1940.

Musical America, November 25, 1939.

LOESERMAN, Arthur, violinist (b. 1904, New York).

Began study at age of 13, with Otto Rauhut. Soloist with Herman Heller, California Theatre, September 18, 1921, scoring a brilliant success. Before going to Germany, in 1922, to study with Carl Flesch of Berlin, he gave a concert in Sorosis Hall. Returned to America in 1924 and became a member of the Minneapolis Symphony with which he remained for several years. At present (1940), engaged with NBC, New York.

Sources:

Interview with Otto Rauhut, February 1940.

Pacific Coast Musical Review, September 17, 1921;  
January 14, 1922.





MILLER, Dolores, violinist (b. March 29, 1927, Healdsburg, California). Parents: Everett and Maureen Miller.

Dolores' mother, who had been a professional violinist, taught her until she was 6. First public appearance at age of 3, in Eureka, California. At age of 6, became pupil of Antonio de Grassi; and substituted for him at the Palace Hotel dinner concert, April 29, 1934. The Musical West critic said, May 1934: "Her tone is surprisingly full and warm, and she plays with a spontaneity and breadth that is most un-childlike." Won the Music and Arts Institute scholarship, \$200, in 1934, to study with De Grassi; this was extended from 1935 to 1939. Formal debut made at the Veterans' Auditorium, May 11, 1936. The San Francisco News, wrote, May 12: "A brilliant career is predicted for this child.... Dolores unquestionably has a fine talent. She has temperament too, and draws a big tone of considerable depth." Was one of four winners, National Federation of Music Clubs violin contest, 1938; winning a violin made by Tony Wons, a \$250 scholarship in cash, and a trip to New York to broadcast over a nationwide hookup. She appeared at the Century Club, for the Pacific Musical Society, on January 11, 1940; and gave a program at Stanford University, January 30, 1940.

Sources:

Interview with Antonio de Grassi, February 1940.  
Musical West, May 1934.  
San Francisco News, May 12, 1936.  
Musical America, March 10, 1938.

MIYAMOTO, Marie, pianist (b. October 7, 1921, San Francisco). Parents: Shiro and Umeno Miyamoto.

Marie began her musical studies at the age of 8 with Elizabeth Boris who has been her only teacher for 10 years. She was a winner in the Music Week contests of 1931, 1933, 1935, and won the outstanding award for 1935. Her first public appearance was in the Morning Star Auditorium, December 5, 1931. On March 21, 1934, before her departure for a short visit to Japan, she gave a concert at the Sorosis Hall. Her program included Ravel's J'Eaux, Chopin's Polonaise, and a Seguidilla by Albéniz. The Musical West, April 1934, wrote: "The young player has more than dexterity of fingers; she has innate musical instinct which gives promise of artistic individuality. Her program was a difficult one and she came through it with honors."



Sources:

Interview with Marie Miyamoto, March 25, 1940.  
Musical West, April 1934.

MONCHEUR, Nellie, pianist (b. August 27, 1922, San Francisco).  
 Parents: Albert and Helene Moncheur.

Nellie's mother is a well-known San Francisco pedagogue. The child showed musical interest at the age of 3, but her studies were retarded until she was 10, at which time she started piano with her mother. Her debut was as guest artist with the San Francisco Cantoria, April 28, 1934, at the Civic Auditorium. She appeared at the Community Playhouse, March 10, 1936. If conditions permit, she plans to study in Europe. She is a protégée of José Iturbi.

Sources:

San Francisco Call-Bulletin, April 28, 1934.

ROYLE, Evelyn, violinist (b. 1914, Healdsburg, California).  
 Parents: John and Joan F. Royle.

Evelyn began her studies at the age of 12, sponsored by Antonio de Grassi. Professional debut made at the Fairmont Hotel, November 8, 1929. The Argonaut, November 16, wrote: "With an exceptional personal grace and the pose of unspoiled simplicity... her performance was, on the whole, worthy of one considerably older. She shows a marked talent that indicates a fruitful and promising future."

Sources:

San Francisco Examiner, October 20, 1929.  
Argonaut, November 16, 1929.

ST. GAUDENS, Louise, pianist (b. September 3, 1929, San Francisco). Parents: Gabriel and Marie St. Gaudens.

Louise has been a pupil of Miss Janet Hale since 1933. Her debut was at the Community Playhouse, May 22, 1937. The San Francisco Chronicle, May 23, said: "Tho a mere baby, nevertheless a real artist. She has dexterity, musicianship and taste. She has been well taught. Her performance was not



a mere parroting of a model, but a genuine interpretation and a sound one. Her technical equipment is far from complete, but this is a matter of immaturity. Hers is bound to be one of the big names of the future..." She has a reading knowledge of three languages and a repertoire of 150 piano works, 4 of them with orchestra. At present (1940), is studying with Miss Hale.

Sources:

Interview with Janet Hale, February 1940.  
San Francisco Chronicle, May 23, 1938.

TAKAKUWA, Akiko, pianist (b. January 5, 1927, San Francisco).  
 Parents: Koichiro and Kaneko Takakuwa.

A pupil of another prodigy, Stewart Brady, little Akiko studied with him for several years prior to the departure of the family for Japan. She won a place in the Music Week contest of May 1936. On March 19, 1937 she was presented in recital at the home of Mrs. Catherine B. Swint. Her program included Bach, Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart.

Sources:

Interview with Catherine B. Swint, March 26, 1940.

TAKAKUWA, Yasuko, pianist (b. June 30, 1925, San Francisco).  
 Parents: Koichiro and Kaneko Takakuwa.

The older sister of Akiko Yasuko began piano at the age of 6 with Mrs. Catherine B. Swint. Her first informal recital occurred on December 15, 1934 at Gyosi Hall. In May 1936 she was a winner in the Music Week contests. Her debut, at Sorosis Hall, June 4, 1937, was reviewed in the San Francisco Call-Bulletin of the next day: "One is reminded anew of the cosmopolitan nature of San Francisco's culture when hearing a tiny Japanese girl play the piano at a recital. We have had other prodigies of Russian, German, French, Italian and American extraction, and we have encouraged them to useful and sometimes brilliant careers. "Comes now the tiny Yasuko Takakuwa, 12 years old, mistress of a very decided art of the pianoforte. ....The child's technique is extraordinary and her memory little short of phenomenal. She revealed a creditable feeling for the meanings of





of the things she played. They had fluency and smoothness and were tonally adequate."

Sources:

Interview with Catherine B. Swint, March 26, 1940.  
San Francisco Call-Bulletin, June 5, 1937.

TAKIYAMA, Florence, pianist (b. June 4, 1918, San Francisco).  
 Parents: Yozo and Shika Takiyama.

Florence began her musical training at the age of 7 under Mrs. Kawasaki, with whom she remained for 3 years. She entered the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 1928 for a year's study with Herbert Jaffe. Following this she studied 6 years with Ada Clement and 3 years with Lillian Hodghead. She graduated in 1939. She was awarded a summer scholarship with Josef Lhevinne and a further award in 1939 of a scholarship at Juilliard with Mr. and Mrs. Lhevinne. In May 1937 she was a winner in the Music Week contest. Her debut was on April 27, 1937, at Sorosis Hall. The San Francisco Examiner, of May 10 commented: "Presented by the Federal Symphony, Florence Takiyama, 17-year-old Japanese pianist, also enjoyed great success. Her number was the Chopin E minor Concerto, which she performed dexterously and with an ample, fine musicality."

Sources:

Interview with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, March 21, 1940.  
San Francisco Examiner, May 10, 1937.

TURNER, Robert, pianist (b. February 13, 1914, San Francisco).  
 Parents: Nathan and Lillian Turner.

Robert began his musical training at the age of 9 with Sergei Mihailoff. After a year and a half he went to Frank Moss for a year and then to Albert Elkus for 3 years. In 1930 he was awarded a Fellowship with Josef and Rosina Lhevinne at the Juilliard School for 4 years, following which it was extended to 1938 as an Advisory Fellowship. At the school he studied composition with Rubin Goldmark; harmony, counterpoint, fugue and orchestration with Bernard Wagenaar; and ensemble with Felix Salmond.





In April 1926 he was the Pacific coast winner of the California Federation of Music Clubs' contest and was sent to the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exposition. In May 1929 he won first prize in the San Francisco Music Week contest. He was a scholarship student in S. Stojowski's master class in 1930; in Harold Bauer's master class at Mills College, 1933; and in Fritz Reiner's conducting class at Curtis Institute, 1938-39.

On February 24, 1929, performed a Mendelssohn concerto over the NEC, repeating the performance on a nationwide hookup, May 31. His New York debut was given on February 23, 1932; and on September 27, his San Francisco debut at the Community Playhouse. The San Francisco News, September 28, said: "His technique is practically infallible; he has splendid tone through a wide range of dynamics, and his interpretations revealed intelligent musicianship of a high order." The San Francisco Chronicle, September 27, wrote: "Robert Turner is past the spectacular prodigy age. But, at nineteen is a pianist to reckon with, both for the future and the present."

Throughout the period 1934-39, he gave more than 100 concerts in the United States and Canada; and played through Italy in 1937. Between 1935 and 1938, Turner played with the Kneisel-Alden-Turner Trio in New York, and the trio appeared at the Town Hall on April 1, 1938.

Turner's most recent performance, at Sage Hall, Smith College, on March 10, 1940, was reviewed in the New Hampshire Gazette, March 11: "This recital confirmed reports of those who had heard Mr. Turner in private performances and expectations aroused by particulars of his training...He is a musician of intelligently directed taste and sound technical equipment."

Mr. Turner has been accompanist of numerous important singers, including Ezio Pinza, Igor Gorin, and Douglas Beattie, between the years 1937 and 1939. Among his compositions that have received performance are a piano concerto, a trio, and several songs which have been sung by Mr. Beattie.

At present (1940), Turner is a member of the Music department of Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

#### Sources:

Interview with Mrs. Lillian Turner, April 1, 1940.  
San Francisco News, September 28, 1932.  
San Francisco Chronicle, September 27, 1933.  
New Hampshire Gazette, Northampton, Mass., March 11, 1940.



WIENER, Frances, violinist (b. April 14, 1909, San Francisco).  
Parents: Jacob and Fanny Wiener.

Frances began her musical studies at the age of 6 with Sigmund Anker, and after 6 years study went to Nathan Firestone for 2 years. Following this Michel Piastro taught her for 2 years. In 1925, she won a 4-year scholarship at the Curtis Institute, graduating in 1929. Her formal debut was at the Fairmont Hotel, December 4, 1923. She included Saint-Saens' Concerto No. 3, Lalo's Symphonie Espagnole, Tartini's Preislied, and Il Trillo del Diavolo.

Sources:

Interview with Miss Wiener, March 25, 1940.

SCHNEIDER, David, violinist (b. April 10, 1918, San Francisco). Parents: Leon and Rose Schneider.

Began his musical studies at the age of 5 with Sigmund Anker with whom he remained for about 1 year. He continued with Otto Rauhut for 3 years; with Jashe Veissi for 2 years; and subsequently for short periods with Michel Piastro, Kathleen Parlow, and Arthur Argiewicz. His first major appearance was in concert at Mills College, May 17, 1936. He was guest soloist with the Federal Symphony, Oakland Auditorium, December 13, 1939, at which time he played the Goldmark Concerto in A major. During 1935 he played with the Federal Music Project; and since 1936, with the San Francisco Symphony.

Sources:

Interview with David Schneider, March 21, 1940.



## FIFTY LOCAL PRODIGIES

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## APPENDIX A

## CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF PRODIGIES

<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Prodigy</u>	<u>Instrument</u>	<u>Debut</u>
1885	Eula May Howard	Piano	1903
1888 June 28	Alma Stenzel	Piano	1899
1891 Dec. 21	Enid Brandt	Piano	1900
1893 Jan. 14	Cecil Cowles	Piano	1903
1896 Sept. 25	Violet Fenster Blagg	Piano	1910
1898 Dec. 28	Lajos Fenster	Violin	1910
1900 Mar. 7	Alice (Frisca) Mayer	Piano	1917
1904	Joseph Lampkin	Violin	1917
1904	Arthur Loeserman	Violin	1921
1905 Jan.	Barbara Lull	Violin	1919
1905 Apr. 8	Flori Gough	Cello	1917
1906 Sept. 21	Evelyn Biebesheimer	Piano-Organ	1923
1908	Norman Smith	Piano	1914
1908 May 27	Lina Pagliughi	Voice	1919
1908 Oct. 27	Catherine Carver	Piano	1916
1908 Jan. 14	Florence Stern	Violin	1918
1909 Apr. 14	Frances Wiener	Violin	1923
1909 Apr. 16	Marcus Gordon	Piano	1925
1911 Mar. 20	Sarah Kreindler	Violin	1921
1912 July 21	Marion Cavanaugh	Piano	1918
1914	Evelyn Royle	Violin	1929
1914 Feb. 13	Robert Turner	Piano	1923
1915	Kayla Mitzel	Violin	1928
1915 Dec. 17	Reah Sadowski	Piano	1929
1916 Apr. 22	Yehudi Menuhin	Violin	1925
1917 Feb. 8	Liberio Filippo	Violin	1930
1917 June 23	Stewart Brady	Voice-Piano	1927
1918 Feb. 8	Patricia Benkman	Piano	1927
1918 Apr. 10	David Schneider	Violin	1936
1918 June 4	Florence Takiyama	Piano	1937
1919 May 5	Alexander High, III	Piano	1932
1920 May	Hephzibah Menuhin	Piano	1928
1920 May 21	Frances Karon	Violin	1935
1920 July 21	Isaac Stern	Violin	1931
1920 July 24	Ruggiero Ricci	Violin	1928
1920 Sept. 13	Philip Tobenkin	Violin	1933
1921 Mar. 11	Beverly Blake	Violin	1927
1921 July 17	James Arkatov	Cello	1932
1921 Sept. 18	Francis Boissevain	Violin	1931
1921 Oct. 7	Marie Miyamoto	Piano	1931
1921 Nov. 4	Miriam Solovieff	Violin	1931
1922	Marjorie Edwards	Violin	1930





## CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF PRODIGES (Cont'd.).

<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Prodigy</u>	<u>Instrument</u>	<u>Debut</u>
1922 May 4	Grisha Goluboff	Violin	1930
1922 Aug. 27	Harry Cylman	Violin	1930
1922 Aug. 27	Nellie Moncheur	Piano	1934
1923 May 1	Marilyn Doty	Violin	1931
1923 Nov. 6	Mischa Myers	Violin	1936
1924 Oct. 14	Laura Dubman	Piano	1930
1924 Nov. 30	Esther Fernandez	Piano	1939
1925 Jan. 15	Ruth Slenczynski	Piano	1930
1925 June 30	Yasuko Takakuwa	Piano	1937
1925 Nov. 2	Barbara Farringer	Piano	1938
1926 Oct. 15	Mildred Lind	Violin	1936
1927	Giuseppe Cusimano	Violin	1935
1927 Jan. 5	Akiko Takakuwa	Piano	1937
1927 Mar. 29	Dolores Miller	Violin	1934
1927 Apr. 1	Peter Paul Loyanich	Piano	1937
1928 Aug. 16	Rebecca Austria	Piano	1938
1929 July 23	Leon Fleischer	Piano	1936
1929 Sept. 3	Louise St.Gaudens	Piano	1937

APPENDIX B

## INSTRUMENTS PLAYED BY PRODIGES

Piano.....	30
Violin.....	27
Cello.....	2
Voice.....	1



APPENDIX C

## TABLES.

## (1) OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF PRODIGIES' FAMILIES:

Professional musicians.....	19
Office workers.....	5
Merchants.....	4
WPA workers.....	3
Jewelers.....	2
Artists.....	2
Day laborers.....	2
Teachers.....	2
Writer.....	1
Dancer.....	1
Inventor.....	1
Dentist.....	1
Druggist.....	1
Public official.....	1
Pawnbroker.....	1
Upholsterer.....	1
Housepainter.....	1
Packinghouse worker.....	1

## (2) MUSICAL BACKGROUND OF PRODIGIES' FAMILIES:

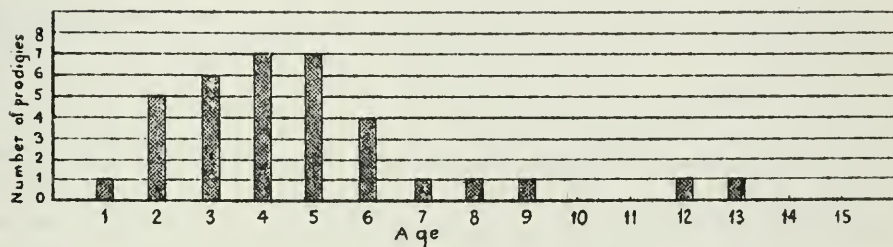
General Musical background.....	53.3%
Professional musician:	
One parent.....	29.1%
Two parents.....	6.6%
No indications.....	43.3%

## (3) RACIAL BACKGROUND OF PRODIGIES' FAMILIES:

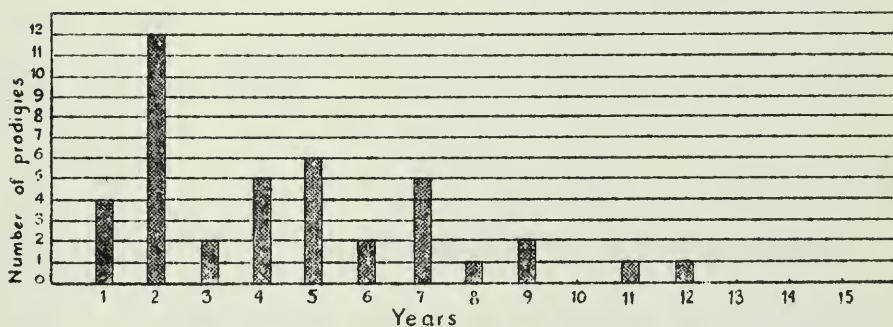
American.....	16
Russian-Jewish.....	10
German-Jewish.....	9
Italian.....	4
Japanese.....	4
Polish-Jewish.....	3
French.....	3
Hungarian-Jewish.....	2
Palestinian-Jewish.....	2
Russian.....	2
Russo-Hungarian.....	1
English-Jewish.....	1
German.....	1
Spanish.....	1
Filipino.....	1



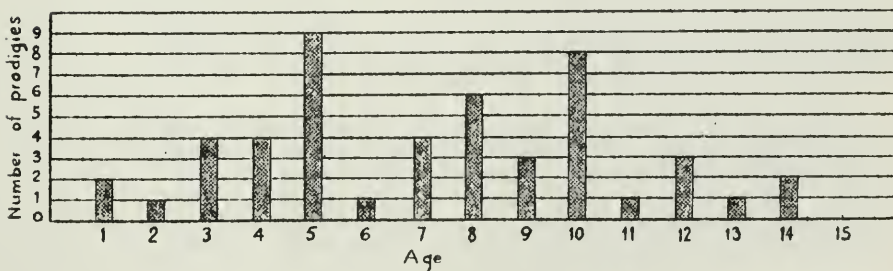
## D. PRODIGES: GRAPHS ON MUSICAL ABILITY



1. FIRST SIGNS OF UNUSUAL MUSICAL TALENT



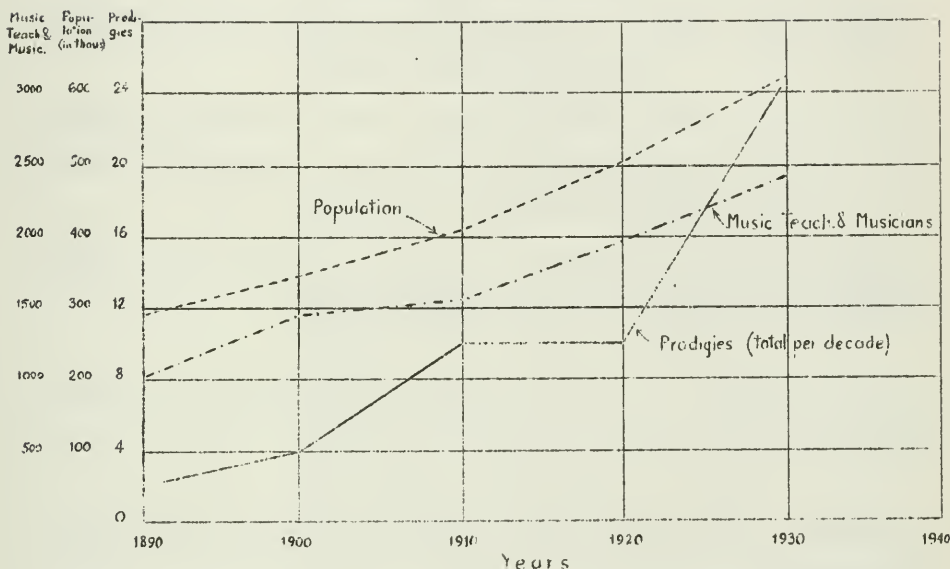
2. YEARS OF STUDY BEFORE DEBUT



3. AGE AT DEBUT



## E. PRODIGIES: GRAPH ON POPULATION RELATIONS



### COMBINED RATIOS: PRODIGIES; PEDAGOGUES; POPULATION

1. There appears to be no definite relation between increase in population and in number of prodigies in any given year, although there is a trend toward larger and larger numbers of prodigies to appear as population increases.
2. There appears to be an acceleration in the rate of prodigy emergence in San Francisco, especially since 1920. In the decade 1920-1930 there is a very marked emergence as compared with the preceding decade.
3. As the population increases so does the number of music teachers and musicians, but since 1900 the rate of population increase has exceeded that of musicians and music teachers in San Francisco. Prior to 1900 there appears to have been a more constant rate of increase as between population and musicians.





## APPENDIX F

TEACHERS OF PRODIGIES.

- ARKATOV, James: cellist: Stanislaus Bon, cello; William Dehe, cello; Edward Harris, piano; Julius Gold, harmony and counterpoint.
- AUSTRIA, Rebecca: pianist: Malen Burnett, piano.
- BENKIAN, Patricia: pianist: Mrs. Ralph Wetmore, piano; Lev Shorr, piano; Gunnar Johansen, piano; Harold Bauer, piano; Marcel Maas, piano.
- BLAGG, Violet Fenster: pianist: Mrs. Theodore Fenster (mother), piano; George Kruger, piano; Mayer-Mahr, piano; Alberto Jonas, piano; Caryl von Holst, voice; Lorna Lachmond, voice.
- BLAKE, Beverly: violinist: Mary Pasmore, violin; Louis Persinger, violin.
- BRADY, Stewart: vocalist-pianist: Mrs. Catherine Swint, voice and piano; Dino Borgioli, voice.
- BRANDT, Enid Lillian: pianist: Mrs. Noah Brandt (mother), piano; William Mason, piano.
- CARVER, Catherine: pianist: Mrs. Sidonia Erkely, piano; Oliver Denton, piano; Carl Friedberg, piano.
- CAVANAUGH, Marion Patricia: pianist: Joseph G. Jacobson, piano.
- COWLES, Cecil Marion: pianist: Mrs. Hubert Cowles (mother), piano; Hugo Mansfeldt, piano.
- CUSIANO, Giuseppe: violinist: Both Lackey Barron, violin.
- CYMAN, Harry: violinist: Sigmund Rader, violin; Efram Zimbalist, violin; Emil Letlin, violin; Jean Galamian, violin.
- DOTY, Marilyn: violinist: Sigmund Anker, violin; Nathan Abas, violin; Kathleen Parlow, violin; Carol Weston, violin; Michel Piastro, violin; David Hannes, violin.
- DUBMAN, Laura: pianist: Mrs. Sonia Dubman (mother), piano; Lev Shorr, piano; Olga Samaroff, piano; Josef Lhevinne, piano; Sascha Gorodnitzki, piano; Marcel Ciampi, piano.



F. TEACHERS OF PRODIGIES (Cont'd).

- EDWARDS, Marjorie: violinist: Mrs. Edwards (mother), piano and violin; Kathleen Parlow, violin; Carol Weston, violin.
- FARRINGER, Barbara: pianist: Lev Shorr, piano
- FENSTER, Lajos: violinist: Theodore Fenster (father), violin; John Patterson, harmony; Julius Gold, harmony.
- FERNANDEZ, Esther: pianist: Lev Shorr, piano.
- FILIPPO, Libero: violinist: Giuseppe Jollain, violin; Sigmund Anker, violin; Louis Persinger, violin.
- FLEISHER, Leon: pianist: Lev Shorr, piano; Gunnar Johansen, piano; Ludwig Altman, piano; Artur Schnabel, piano.
- GOLUBOFF, Grisha: violinist: Max Goluboff (father), violin; Michel Piastro, violin; Louis Persinger, violin; Jacques Thibaud, violin; Bronislaw Hubermann, violin.
- GORDON, Marcus: pianist: Paulane Newman, piano; Josef Lhevinne, piano.
- GOUGH, Flori: cellist: Stanislaus Bem, cello; Conservatoire de Paris with Loeb, D'Ollone, Capot, and D'Indy.
- HIGH, III, Alexander Z.: pianist: Bessie D. Kruger, piano.
- HOWARD, Eula May: pianist: Hugo Mansfeldt, piano.
- KARON, Frances: pianist: Mrs. Karon (mother), piano; David Wollner, violin; Louis Debovsky, violin; Michel Piastro, violin; Janet Hale Gold, piano.
- KREINDLER, Sarah: violinist: Sigmund Anker, violin.
- LAMPKIN, Joseph: violinist: Ben Tuttle, violin; Antonio de Grassi, violin; Leopold Auer, violin; Jenö Hubay, violin.
- LIND, Mildred: violinist: Waldemar Lind (father), violin.
- LOESERMAN, Arthur: violinist: Otto Rauhut, violin; Carl Flesch, violin.



F. TEACHERS OF PRODIGIES (Cont'd).

- LOYANICH, Peter Paul: pianist: Adolph Ryss, piano; José Iturbi piano.
- LULL, Barbara: violinist: Mrs. Henry Lull (mother), violin; Antonio de Grassi, violin; Leopold Auer, violin; Alexander Block, violin.
- MAYER, Alice (Frisca): pianist: Mrs. Benjamin Mayer (mother), piano; Sam Fleishman, piano; Pierre Douillet, piano; Leopold Godowsky, piano.
- MENUHIN, Hephzibah: pianist: Mrs. Judith Blockley, piano; Lev Shorr, piano; Marcel Ciampi, piano.
- MENUHIN, Yehudi: violinist: Sigmund Anker, violin; Louis Persinger, violin; Georges Enesco, violin; Adolph Busch, violin.
- MILLER, Dolores: violinist: Mrs. Everett Miller (mother), violin; Antonio de Grassi, violin.
- LITZEL, Kayla: violinist: Louis Persinger, violin.
- MONCHEUR, Nellie: pianist: Helene Moncheur (mother), piano.
- MYERS, Mischa: violinist: Robert Ashman, violin; Naoum Blinder, violin; Julius Gold, harmony and counterpoint; Gertrude Shenson, piano.
- PAGLIUGHI, Lina: vocalist: Mr. Serantoni, voice; Mme. Silvia Puerari Maracci, voice; Domenico Brescia, voice; M. O. Baragnoli, voice.
- RICCI, Ruggiero: violinist: Elizabeth Lackey, violin; Louis Persinger, violin.
- ROYLE, Evelyn: violinist: Antonio de Grassi, violin.
- SADOWSKI, Reah: pianist: Mrs. Sadowski (mother), piano; Adolph Ryss, piano; Josef Hofmann, piano; Alberto Jonas, piano; Josef Lhevinne, piano; Mme. Rosina Lhevinne, piano.
- SIENCZYNSKI, Ruth: pianist: Josef Slenczynski (father), piano; Mrs. Alma Schmidt-Kennedy, piano; Albert Elkus, piano; Phyllida Ashley, piano; Gunnar Johansen, piano; Egon Petri, piano; Artur Schnabel, piano; Alfred Cortot, piano.



F. TEACHERS OF PRODIGIES (Cont'd).

- SMITH, Norman: pianist: Mrs. Smith (mother), piano; George Kruger, piano.
- SOLOVIEFF, Miriam: violinist: Ela Tittisin, piano; Adolph Ryss, piano; Robert Pollak, violin; Kathleen Parlow, violin; Carol Weston, violin; Louis Persinger, violin; Carl Flesh, violin.
- STENZEL, Alma: pianist: Hugo Mansfeldt, piano.
- STERN, Florence: violinist: Sigmund Anker, violin; Leopold Auer, violin.
- STERN, Isaac: violin: Mrs. Solomon Stern (mother), piano; Robert Pollak, violin; Nathan Abas, violin; Louis Persinger, violin; Naoum Blinder, violin.
- TOBENKIN, Philip: violinist: Sigmund Rader, violin; Agnes Klegg, violin; Natalie Bigelow, violin.

A D D E N D A

- BIEBESHEIMER, Evelyn: pianist: Mrs. Catherine B. Swint, piano; Elsie Cook Hughes, piano; Warren Allen, organ.
- BOISSEVAIN, Francis: violinist: Isabel Stovel, violin; Raymond Pittinger, string quartet and orchestra; Frederick Zech, string quartet; William Knuth, orchestra; William Van den Burg, orchestra; Giulio Silva, orchestra.
- MIYAMOTO, Marie: pianist: Elizabeth Boris, piano.
- ST. GAUDENS, Louise: pianist: Miss Janet Hale, piano.
- SCHNEIDER, David: violinist: Sigmund Anker, violin; Otto Rauhut, violin; Jashe Veissi, violin; Michel Piastro, violin; Kathleen Parlow, violin; Arthur Argiewicz, violin.
- TAKAKUWA, Akiko: pianist: Stewart Brady, piano.
- TAKAKUWA, Yasudo: pianist: Mrs. Catherine B. Swint, piano.





A D D E N D A (cont'd).

TAKIYAMA, Florence: pianist: Mrs. Kawasaki, piano; Herbert Jaffe, piano; Ada Clement, piano; Lillian Hodghead, piano; Josef and Rosina Lhevinne, piano.

TURNER, Robert: pianist: Sergei Mihailoff, piano; Frank Moss, piano; Albert Elkus, piano; Josef and Rosina Lhevinne, piano; Rubin Goldmark, composition; Bernard Wagenaar, harmony, counterpoint, fugue, orchestration; Felix Salmond, ensemble; Sigismund Stojowski, piano; Harold Bauer, piano; Fritz Reiner, conducting.

WIENER, Frances: violinist: Sigmund Anker, violin; Nathan Firestone, violin; Michel Piastro, violin.



## APPENDIX G

MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS: 1930-40

## CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF MUSIC CLUBS:

(info: Mrs. H. Haley, 735 - 21st Avenue).

Scholarship award \$100 every 2 years; national winner selected, given \$100; candidate eligible from entire state; awards in violin, piano, voice.

Recipients:

Miss Marion Mabey, Los Angeles, 1933, voice.

Elizabeth Mordgridge, Los Angeles, 1937, violin.

Mignonne Craeger, San Carlos, 1939, violin.

## ELIZABETH SPRAGUE COOLIDGE SCHOLARSHIP:

Scholarship for string quartet, 1939, to study with Ferenc Molnar in School of Chamber Music.

Recipients:

Mischa Myers, San Francisco, violin.

Elizabeth Moser Bread, Palo Alto, violin.

Mario de Lorenzo, San Jose, viola.

Virginia Elridge, San Jose, cello.

## JUILLIARD SCHOOL OF MUSIC:

Annual competition for publication of new orchestra works.

Recipients:

Albert I. Elkus, San Francisco, for composition:

Impressions from a Greek Tragedy, 1935.

MUSIC AND ARTS INSTITUTE (affiliated with Golden Gate College)  
(795 Sutter Street; Ross McKee, Director).

Recipients:

Dolores Miller--\$200, 1 year under Antonio de Grassi, 1934.

(This scholarship, granted to Miss Miller for 1934 only, was subsequently extended from 1935 through 1939).

Betty Holman--awarded the Dr. Antonia Brico scholarship in conduction, \$60 for 2 months, 1938.

Laura Jean Nast--awarded Wager Swayne scholarship in piano, \$400 for two terms, 1939.

James Panderweeken--awarded Frederick Haywood scholarship in voice, \$200 for two terms, 1939.

Stanley Plummer, Sacramento--awarded a violin scholarship with Antonio de Grassi, \$200 for 1 year, 1930.



G: MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS (Cont'd.)

## SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC:

(3435 Sacramento Street).

Piano Scholarship with Ada Clement.

Recipients:

Bernice Hintz.....1931 through 1937.

Mary Clement..... " " "

Florence Takiyama.. " " "

Manya Klimoff..... " " "

Rose Resnick.....1939 (still active).

Isaac Stern: violin under Nathan Abas, 1929-32.

Marilyn Doty: violin under Robert Polak, 1929-32.

Katherine Connelly: cello under Stanislaus Ben,  
1929-33.

William Klenz: cello under Stanislaus Ben, 1929-33.

Andrew Robertson: voice under Rena Lazelle, 1929-  
36.

Ray Green: composition under Albert Elkus, 1928-34.

Mischa Kosloff: theory and composition under

Lillian Hodgehead, 1937 (still active).

Juillard scholarships, \$200 for 1 year, 1929-30:

Won by following students of the San Francisco  
Conservatory of Music:

Abraham Weiss, violin.

Ruth Meridith, piano.

## TO KALON CLUB:

Annual awards to promising singers, \$200 and \$300, through  
municipal classes under direction of Dr. Hans Leschke.  
Requirement: study with teacher in bay region.Recipients:

Mildred Mohler....\$300, 1930.

Esther Green.....\$300, 1931.

Charles Docker....\$300, 1932.

Iris Young.....\$200, 1935.

Ernst Bacon..... commission to write a cantata  
1936.

Ann Barber.....\$200, 1938.

Peggy Turnly.....\$200, 1939.

## SHERMAN CLAY AND COMPANY:

Talent quartet organized by George Gibson Davis, in con-  
junction with the Sherman Clay Music Company and the  
Daily News (sponsors), resulted in scholarships under  
direction of Carmen de Obarrio (piano), Louie Lebovsky  
(violin), Theodore Stong (Hammond Electric Organ), Marion  
Dozier (voice). Recipients picked by general public.



## APPENDIX H

SCHOOLS AND CONSERVATORIES OF MUSIC.  
(Schools with a \* are still functioning).

ADA CLEMENT PIANO SCHOOL: Established 1917.  
3435 Sacramento Street.

\*ALLEN'S HARMONY SYSTEM: Est. 1918  
79 Haight Street.

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC. Andrew Williams, Director.  
119 Turk Street.

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF OPERA: Est. 1913. Paul Steindorff, Director.  
Turk and Polk Streets.

ANIL DEER CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1914.  
401 Fillmore Street.

\*ARRILLAGA MUSICAL COLLEGE: Est. 1907.  
2351 Jackson Street.

BERINGER CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1896. Prof. J. Beringer,  
Director. 926 Pierce Street.

BRANDT CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1918. Noah Bradt, Director.  
2325 Divisadero Street (1st location); 2211 Scott Street (2nd  
location).

CALIFORNIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1911  
Kohler and Chase Building (1st location); 1509 Gough Street  
(2nd location).

CALIFORNIA OPERA AND GOLDEN GATE DRAMATIC SCHOOL: Est. 1900.  
Joseph Greven, Director. 824 Eddy Street.

CARITA MUSIC SCHOOL: Est. 1924.  
466 Columbus Avenue.

CARITA MUSIC SCHOOL: Est. 1924.  
150 Powell Street.

CITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC: Est. 1927.  
1750 Fillmore Street (1st location); 2150 Mission Street (2nd  
location).

COLUMBIA SCHOOL OF MUSIC: Est. 1910. Minna C. Hoffman, Director  
1629 - 9th Avenue.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC. Gertrude Field, Director.  
544 Capp Street.





## H. SCHOOLS AND CONSERVATORIES (Cont'd).

CONSERVATORY OF MODERN MUSIC: Est. 1928.  
533 Post Street.

CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1930.  
250 Columbus Avenue.

D'ALLESSIO CONSERVATORY: Est. 1925.  
307 - 6th Avenue,

DOUILLET CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1913. Pierre Douillet,  
Director. 1721 Jackson Street.

EUROPEAN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1914. William F. Laraja,  
Director. 1252 Jackson Street.

\*FEDERAL MUSIC SCHOOL: Est. 1935. Work Projects Administration.  
2351 Jackson Street.

\*GOLDEN GATE COLLEGE. Ross McKee, Director.  
220 Golden Gate Avenue.  
(Merged with MUSIC AND ART INSTITUTE OF SAN FRANCISCO).

GOLDEN GATE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1939.  
33 Mason Street.

GREGORY WESTERN STATES CONSERVATORIUM: Est. 1891.  
1455 Sacramento Street.

HELMERMAN'S CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1919.  
3350 - 23rd Street.

IMPERIAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC: Est. 1929.  
157 Fell Street,

INSTITUTE OF MUSICAL ART: Est. 1909.  
817 Grove Street.

JEANNE JONELLI VOCAL STUDIO: Est. 1921.  
Richelieu Hotel, Geary and Van Ness Avenue.

KELLER CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1907.  
1577 Oak Street.

LICHTENSTEIN VIOLIN SCHOOL: Est. 1924.  
3145 Washington Street.

\*LISSNER SCHOOL OF POPULAR MUSIC: Est. 1939.  
26 O'Farrell Street (1st location); 555 Sutter Street (2nd  
location).



## H. SCHOOLS AND CONSERVATORIES (Cont'd.).

MANFIELD CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1907; after 1914 known as MANFIELD-JENKINS CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC.  
1256 Golden Gate Avenue (1st location); 2482 Mission Street (2nd location).

\*MANNING SCHOOL OF MUSIC: Est. 1912. John Manning, Director.  
2550 Jackson Street (1st location); 3242 Washington Street (2nd location); 1904 Washington Street (present location).

\*MICHELETTE MUSIC STUDIOS: Est. 1935.  
1306 Portola Drive.

MILLER SCHOOL OF MUSIC: Est. 1930.  
435 Powell Street.

\*MODERN SCHOOL OF MUSIC: Est. 1926.  
34 Golden Gate Avenue (1st location); 1052 Market Street (present location).

MUSIC AND ART INSTITUTE OF SAN FRANCISCO. Ross McKee, Director  
795 Sutter Street.

NEW YORK CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1929.  
485 - 14th Street.

PACIFIC CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1910. Thor Roje, Director.  
995 Market Street.

PASHORE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1914. H. Bickford Pashore, Director. 1470 Washington Street.

\*PERKINS IRVING PIANO STUDIO OF POPULAR MUSIC:  
935 Market Street, Suite 610, Kress Building.

PHILHARMONIC SCHOOL OF MUSIC: Est. 1935. M. Kernan, Director.  
2319 Market Street.

\*ST. ROSE ACADEMY OF MUSIC: Est. 1911. Dominican Sisters.  
Pine and Pierce Streets.

\*SAN FRANCISCO ACADEMY OF ALLIED ARTS. L. Galferu, Director.  
1699 Taylor Street.

\*SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, INC.: Est. 1923.  
Ada Clement, Director. 3435 Sacramento Street.

\*SAN FRANCISCO INSTITUTE OF MUSIC: Est. 1939.  
358 Sutter Street.



# H. SCHOOLS AND CONSERVATORIES (Cont'd.).

SAN FRANCISCO MASTER SCHOOL OF SINGING AND OPERA. Frederick  
E. Blickfelt, Director. Empire Hotel, 24th floor.

TWENTIETH CENTURY CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Est. 1908.  
1300 Golden Gate Avenue.

\*UNITED INSTITUTE OF MUSIC: Est. 1939.  
320 Market Street.

VON MEYERINCK SCHOOL OF MUSIC: Est. 1895.  
818 Grove Street.

\*WHITLER PIANO SCHOOL: Est. 1939.  
408 Stockton Street.

YAGODNA MUSIC SCHOOL: Est. 1931.  
960 Bush Street.

YIDDISH FOLK SCHULE: Est. 1931  
1047 Steiner Street.



## APPENDIX J

PATRONS OF MUSIC

ARMSEY, Leonora Wood, (b. May 9, 1876, Springfield, Illinois). Parents: Tingley and Leonora Wood. Married: George Newell Armsby. Children: George Newell Armsby, Jr. and Leonora Armsby Hendrickson.

Graduate, Monticello Junior College. California resident, 45 years. Member: committee on organization of New Orient Society; former president, chairman of Music Committee and member Executive Committee of the Philharmonic Society of San Mateo County. Vice-president and director, Schola Cantorum, New York. Member: D.A.R.; Women's National Tennis Club.

BARKAN, Dr. Hans, ophthalmologist (b. July 26, 1882, San Francisco). Parents: Adolph and Louise Desepte Barkan. Married: Phoebe Bunker, October 20, 1916. Children: Adolph William and Phoebe Sarah.

Graduated from Stanford University, 1905; M.D. from Harvard, 1910-11, and instructor, 1911-12. Post-graduate work in Vienna, 1912 and volunteer assistant in the Vienna eye clinic, 1912-14. Assistant instructor and associate professor of ophthalmology at Stanford University, 1914-28; clinic professor, 1928-1940. Member of the board of Medical-Dental Building Corporation; Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Army, 1916-18; member of California Medical Association, American Ophthalmology Society, Pacific Coast Oto-Ophthalmology Society. Member of the Delta Tau Delta, Alpha Omega, Alpha Sigma Nu Sigma. Member of Olympic Club, Seven Arts Club, Army and Navy Club. Member of the editorial staff, American Journal of Ophthalmology and contributor on ophthalmological subjects.

BENDER, Albert Maurice, (b. Juno 18, 1868, Dublin, Ireland). Parents: Rev. Dr. Philip and Augusta (Brennes) Bender.

Attended the Dr. Bender School for Boys, Dublin, 1875-79; Beanford College, St. Leonard-on-the-Sea, England, 1879-81. Came to the United States in 1883 and became a citizen in 1889. Worked in insurance office, has been a general insurance agent since 1890. Received: honorary Litt. D. from Mills College and LL. D. from University of California. Decorated: Order of Cavalier of the Crown, Italy; Chevalier of Legion of Honor, France. Trustee of Mills College; commissioner of San Francisco Public Library; member of Board of Directors, San Francisco Orchestra and San Francisco Art Association.





J: PATRONS OF MUSIC (Cont'd).

BIRMINGHAM, Lillian Kraft (b.1873, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada).  
Married: Joseph Edward Birmingham.

From a musical family, Mrs. Birmingham began piano lessons at 4 years old. At 15, appeared in public, but turned to voice in 1890. Studied voice with Mrs. Marriner-Campbell, and began singing at St. Luke's Church. At 21, after a benefit performance for her, she went to Paris where she studied with George Henschel and Jacques Brouhy. Debut in London, with George Henschel at piano, an unprecedented action on his part. Returning to San Francisco, Mrs. Birmingham toured California with a concert company. Mrs. Birmingham has also sung at the Trinity Unitarian Church and the Temple of Israel. She has always been interested in musical activities. In 1931 she raised \$11,000 for the National Music Convention. Served 2 years as president of the California Federation of Music Clubs. She has served on music committees for the International Golden Gate Exposition, the Children's Symphony, the women's committee of the San Francisco Symphony and the Opera Association. Mrs. Birmingham founded the San Francisco Junior Musical Club more than 20 years ago and is still in charge of it. A junior auxiliary of the San Francisco Musical Club, its membership includes children from 6 to 19 years of age. Its monthly meeting is held at the Palace Hotel, presided over by the directors and counsellors chosen from the children.

BUSH, Mrs. Philip.

Responsible for the sponsorship of Miriam Solovieff and Laura Dubman. Arranged a private recital for Miriam, at which Mrs. I. Golden, Mrs. Ernest Suttan, Mrs. E. S. Heller, Mrs. Walter S. Heller, and the Haas family each contributed \$1000 for the furtherance of Miriam's education in New York.

CAMERON, George Toland, newspaper publisher (b. March 16, 1873, Red Bluff, California). Parents: James Strong and Augusta Gerke Cameron. Married: Helen Margaret de Young, November 30, 1908.

Educated at Cogswell Polytechnic School of San Francisco. Organized the Pacific Oil Transportation Company in 1905. President of the Santa Cruz Portland Cement Company, 1908-40. Organizer of the Universal Oil Company, 1911, and became president. Became publisher and president of the Chronicle Publishing Company, 1925. Member: Bohemian Club, San Francisco Golf and Country Club, Union League, and Burlingame Country Club.



J: PATRONS OF MUSIC (Cont'd).

COOLIDGE, Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague (b. Chicago, Illinois). Parents: Albert and Nancy Ann (Atwood) Arnold. Married: Frederic Shurtleff Coolidge, November 12, 1891. Children: Albert Sprague.

An outstanding patron of music, Mrs. Coolidge has been a donor of composition prizes, a pioneer in introducing new and modern works in the United States, and has sponsored the appearance of European and United States artists. She has given an Auditorium to the Library of Congress; one to Chicago, 1930; the South Mountain Temple of Chamber Music, Pittsfield, Massachusetts; the Sprague Memorial Hall, Yale University; established the Pension Fund for the Chicago Orchestra; a Crippled Childrens' Home, Pittsfield, Massachusetts; and the Coolidge Foundation, Washington, D.C. Decorated: Legion of Honor, France; Order of Leopold, Belgium; Cobbett medal, London; honorary citizen of Frankfort. She is a member of the Colony Club and Cosmopolitan Club, New York; Chilton Club, Boston; Friday Fortnightly Club and Arts Club, Chicago; Sulgrave Club, Washington, D.C.; Wednesday Morning Country Club, Pittsfield, Massachusetts; American Women's Club, Paris and London. Mrs. Coolidge is most noted for the establishment of the Coolidge String Quartet--J. William Kroll and Nicolai Berezwosky, violins; Nicholas Modavan, viola; and Victor Gottlieb, cello. She has honorary degrees from several universities: M.A., Mt. Holyoke College, 1926; Litt. D., Smith College, 1927; M.A., Yale University, 1927; A.M., Mills College, 1928; LL.D., University of California, 1933. Mrs. Coolidge has consistently sponsored the best in music, commissioned works in the field of chamber music, and has engaged noted string quartets to give public concerts in San Francisco during the past decade as well as in other cities throughout the United States.

CROCKER, Templeton, banker (b. September 2, 1884, San Francisco). Parents: Charles and Jennie (Easton) Crocker.

Member of a leading pioneer family, Mr. Crocker was graduated from West Minster School, Simsbury, Connecticut, 1903; and received his A. B. degree from Yale, 1908. He is noted for his interest in scientific research; is a member of the American Museum of Natural History and the California Academy of Sciences. Decorated: Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, France. He has written the libretto of an opera, Fay-Yen-Fah, produced in San Francisco. He has been the sole patron of prodigy Grisha Goluboff.





J: PATRONS OF MUSIC (Cont'd).

CROCKER, William H., banker (b. January 13, 1861, Sacramento, California). Parents: Charles and Mary Ann (Deming) Crocker. Married: Ethel W. Sperry, October 6, 1886.

He received his Ph. D. from Sheffield Scientific School (Yale), 1882. He entered the banking business in 1883, and has remained with it ever since. Mr. Crocker was first vice-president of the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915. He is president of the Crocker First National Bank; the Crocker Securities Company; the Crocker Investment Company; the Provident Securities Company; the Crocker Estate Company; and the Pacific Improvement Company. He is a director of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company, the San Francisco Remedial Loan Association, and the Pacific Gas and Light Company. He is a member of the University Club and the Metropolitan Club, New York; the Pacific Union Club, the University Club, the Bohemian Club, the Olympic Club, and the Union League, San Francisco.

DE-LEE, Mrs. S. T. (Ida Sampson)

Mrs. De-Lee is an accomplished musician who studied piano in the early 1890s with Mrs. Aida Weigel and Mrs. S.G. Fleishman. At the turn of the century she organized a musical club with five other girls, the Aby Cheney Amateur Club, which became the Chaminade Club, predecessor of the present Pacific Musical Club. After a trip to Berlin, to study piano with Josef Lhevinne, she returned to New York where she lived for the next 20 years. She returned to San Francisco in 1931 and became deeply interested in the San Francisco String Quartet, then newly organized. She is the quartet's chief sponsor.

EHRMAN, Sydney, lawyer (b. August 23, 1873, San Francisco). Parents: Myer and Fredericka (Rider) Ehrman. Married: Florence Hellman, June 30, 1904. Children: Sidney Hellman, deceased, and Esther Hellman.

Mr. Ehrman studied at the University of Munich, 1892-93; received his B.L. degree from the University of California, 1896; and his LL.B. from Hastings College of Law, and Garret W. McEnerney, with whom he remained until 1905. He became associated with the firm of Heller, Powers, and Ehrman in 1906; and since 1921, with the firm of Heller, Ehrman, White, and McAuliffe. He is a Regent for the University of California; a director of the San Francisco Community Chest, the San Francisco Opera Company, and the San Francisco Musical Association. Mr. Ehrman was the sole sponsor of Yehudi Menuhin.



J: PATRONS OF MUSIC (Cont'd).GOLDSTEIN, Miss Lutie D.

One of the most active members and promoters of musical and cultural activities in San Francisco. Descendant of a pioneer family, her home environment led to the fostering of musical interests. In 1930 she became the main sponsor of Isaac Stern, then 10 years old. Miss Goldstein must be credited with seeing the vast possibilities back of his talent, though he was a slowly-developing prodigy.

GUGGENHIME, Mrs. Leon (Lili), (b. San Francisco).

Born in San Francisco more than 70 years ago, Mrs. Guggenhime has been constantly interested in the musical life of her native city. She was co-founder with Wheeler Beckett of the Childrens' Symphony. Mr. Beckett, the symphony's first conductor, composed the Cinderella Overture for that organization, and dedicated it to Mrs. Guggenhime--this work was performed by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, March 14, 1930. She is the principal sponsor of Peter Paul Loyanich.

HECHT, Edith, (b. January 23, 1875, San Francisco). Parents: Abraham E. and Amelia Kaufmann Hecht.

Miss Hecht is a graduate of the old Lowell High School of San Francisco. During her freshman year at the University of California she went to Europe for 3 years for study abroad. She has written many short stories, including those published in 1908 in the Argonaut and the Overland Monthly. In 1933 her book Life's Bazaar was published. She is a member of the Municipal Moving Picture Censors Board.

HECHT, Elias, (b. August 14, 1879, San Francisco; d. April 18, 1927). Parents: Abraham E. and Amelia Kaufmann Hecht.

A graduate of the University of California, he went to Europe to study flute with Corregio in Germany. In San Francisco he studied with Neubauer. He founded the Chamber Music Society of San Francisco, and did much to foster the love and growth of chamber music performance.

KOSHLAND, Cora Schweitzer (Mrs. Marcus S.), (b. San Francisco). Children: Daniel, Robert J. Koshland, and Mrs. Louise Sloss.

Mrs. Koshland has been associated with the musical life of San Francisco since 1914 when she gave a salon concert featuring the young singer Constance Alexander. Her musical soirees have attracted the attention of the musically





J: PATRONS OF MUSIC (Cont'd).

discriminating. It was in her music room, April 19, 1938, that Rose Resnick, a blind pianist, was heard--which resulted in a scholarship with E. Robert Schmitz. Mischa Myers, the prodigy violinist, played there on February 13, 1940. In 1932, Mrs. Koshland was chairman of the Women's Auxiliary of the Musical Association of the Symphony, in which capacity she did excellent work in the drive to aid the symphony. She is a member of the Musical Association of San Francisco; and is on the executive committee, the music committee, and the Board of Directors of that organization.

LIVERMORE, Edith, (b. July 19, 1870, Oakland, California). Parents: Horatio P. and Mattie (Banks) Livermore.

Miss Livermore was privately educated and spent many years of her early life in Europe. Horatio P. Livermore, a California pioneer, was the promoter and founder of the first electric trolley line to run from Folsom to Sacramento, California. He also managed the Coffin-Reddington Company. Miss Livermore's mother was a cultured musician and a patron of the Arts. Following the World War, Miss Livermore returned to San Francisco. She was one of the founders of the San Francisco Opera Association. She has been an active worker with both the opera and the symphony. She has been a vice-president of the Pro Musica, and is at present a director of that organization.

McKINNON, Mrs. Harold R. (Katherine Duer), (b. December 26, 1895, San Francisco). Parents: George M. and Kate Duer Babcock Stoney. Married: H. R. McKinnon, October 1934.

Mrs. McKinnon's education was mainly with private tutors in Paris and Germany. In Paris she studied piano with René le Normand; and in Dresden, Germany, piano with Paul Lehmann. Her family have always been interested in the musical arts, a cousin of her mother's, Major Henry Lee Higginson, endowed the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Mrs. McKinnon is president of the Young Peoples' Symphony Orchestra. She is also a member of the Women's Committee of the San Francisco Symphony. In 1939 she was president of Pro Musica. She is one of the pioneer workers in the fostering of symphonic music appreciation among school children. She has lectured on this subject extensively, several times on the radio. Most recently she was chairman of the Ruth Slenczynski Concert for the Finnish Relief Fund, given March 7, 1940, at the War Memorial Opera House.



J: PATRONS OF MUSIC (Cont'd)

PHELAN, James Duval, (b. April 20, 1861, San Francisco, d. August 7, 1930). Parents: James and Alico (Kelly) Phelan.

Senator Phelan graduated from St. Ignatius College, San Francisco, in 1881, following which he studied law at the University of California for a year and then travelled for 2 years. In 1893 he was vice-president of the World's Columbian Exposition Commission at Chicago where he supervised the construction of the California Building. In 1897 he was elected as reform candidate for mayor of San Francisco, being twice re-elected, serving until 1902. He administered the relief fund sent by President Theodore Roosevelt following the 1906 disaster. He was elected United States Senator in 1914, filling that office until 1921. He served as a Regent of the University of California from 1898 to 1914. He was a benefactor of all the arts, helping many painters, sculptors, poets, and musicians. His home at Saratoga, "Montalvo," was bequeathed to the San Francisco Art Association. Following his world tour in 1921-22, he wrote and published a book, Boob's Travel and Comment.

TOBIN, Richard M., banker (b. April 9, 1866, San Francisco). Parents: Richard and Mary (Regan) Tobin.

Mr. Tobin was educated at St. Ignatius College, San Francisco. In 1889 he became director of the Hibernia Bank, and in 1906, the secretary and treasurer. He is president of the Association of Saving Banks of San Francisco. He has been active in diplomatic work for the Government. He represented the United States as cable censor in Paris in 1918, was assigned assistant to the American Embassy, and was attached to the American Commission to negotiate peace. In 1923 he was envoy extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Netherlands, from which he resigned in 1929. During this period he played quartets at the home of Albert Einstein. He is president of the Musical Association of San Francisco; a trustee of Mills College; a director of the California Historical Society; and member of the Provincial Society for Arts and Sciences, Utrecht. He has been decorated: Commander of the Legion of Honor, France; and with the Grand Cross of the Order of Orange-Nassau. Mr. Tobin is a member of the Pacific Union Club, San Francisco; the Knickerbocker Club and Grolier Club, New York; and the St. James Club, London.

SLOSS, Mrs. M. C.

Mrs. Sloss has been active in musical circles of San Francisco for many years, in addition to her many activities in the fields of social welfare. In 1934, she presided



at a tea in the Fairmont Hotel at which San Francisco's aspirations both in opera and symphony were discussed. She is a member of the Musical Association of San Francisco, serving on its executive committee, music committee, and Board of Governors. She is also one of the founders of the San Francisco Opera Association.

STERN, Rosalie Meyer (Mrs. Sigmund), (b. Los Angeles, Calif.).

Following a survey of music in San Francisco by the National Recreation Association, it was reported that there was a lack of outlet for high school graduates to continue the valuable training that they received in their school orchestras. Mrs. Stern motivated the founding of the Junior Civic Symphony, a division of the San Francisco Recreation Department. After the death of Sigmund Stern in 1929, Mrs. Stern filled his place on the Board of Governors of the Musical Association. She has been one of the staunchest supporters of the Opera Association. In 1932 she presented to the city, as a memorial to her husband, the Sigmund Stern Recreational Grove, 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. It consists of 14 acres of her own land combined with additional land purchased by the city, and the deed of gift stipulates that it must remain forever a recreational grove for the pleasure of the citizens of the city. It is used for musical fetes, dramatics, and pageantry. Another magnificent gift of Mrs. Stern was the new dormitory at the University of California, to accommodate 100 men. Mrs. Stern is president of the Recreation Commission and is the leader of the Sigmund Stern Grove Musical Festival Committee which sponsors free summer outdoor concerts in the Grove on Sunday afternoons.

STINE-LEIS, Mrs. Isabel, (b. February 21, 1880, San Francisco). Parents: Benjamin Cyrus and Helen (MacLeod) London. Married: Oliver Charles Stine, September 27, 1905; deceased. Children: Charles MacLeod, Oliver Charles, and Helen MacLeod (Mrs. Ernest Wendenhall). Married: Francis William Leis, June 1924.

Graduated from Kings Conservatory, San Jose, California, in 1899. She studied music with Frank Louie King, Peter Allen, Edward Schneider, John Haradoen Pratt, Gaston Usigli, Oscar Weil, Domenico Brescia, Richard Hageman, and Alfred Hertgin. She has sponsored numerous artists, including Gaetano Merola, Lina Pagliughi, John Howell, Kajetan Atti, Jasha Davidoff, Paul Shulgin, Olivia de Havilland, and Joan Fontaine. She was instrumental in bringing to the Metropolitan Opera, Quena Mario and Ina Bourskaya. In 1924 she staged Madamo Butterfly in San Francisco. She was first





J: PATRONS OF MUSIC (Cont'd).

chairman of the Opera Ballet School. Most important of Mrs. Stine-Leis' activities was the founding of the San Francisco Opera Association in 1923--a project first conceived in 1920 and carried out with the help of other music benefactors of San Francisco.

A LIST OF ADDITIONAL MUSIC PATRONS

E. Raymond Armsby	J. Emmet Hayden
G. Stanleigh Arnold	Mrs. I. W. Hellman
Mrs. Alice May Baker	Frederick J. Koster
Mrs. George W. Baker, Jr.	William F. Leib
Mrs. Edward Otis Bartlett	Gaetano Merola
Miss Lena Blanding	C. O. G. Miller
Miss Louise A. Boyd	Robert W. Miller
Mrs. F. W. Bradley	Kenneth Monteagle
H. Sewall Bradley	Guido J. Musto
Paul Bissinger	Dwight F. McCormack
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Frank J. Frost	Mrs. Sarah Stetson Winslow
Don E. Gilman	Leonard E. Wood
Mrs. Harry S. Haley	





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HISTORY OF MUSIC PROJECT  
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1940

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Cornel Lengyel,  
Supervisor.





WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION  
Northern California  
San Francisco  
1940

San Francisco -- a center of music in the West since the gold rush days -- offers a rich and as yet hardly touched field for investigation. The main object of the History of Music Project is to prepare a comprehensive history of San Francisco music. This is being done through a series of monographs covering its phases from 1849 to the present. Written in a clear, concise and vivid style, it is to be published in twelve or more mimeographed volumes, appropriately illustrated wherever possible.

The series are to provide the student and the musician with a reference work of local significance and a compendium for consultation. To the author, critic, and historian it should be a valuable depository of information and source material. A work such as this will make accessible to the layman an interesting history of the city's musical culture, a subject which as yet has had but fragmentary treatment. The monographs are to be distributed to specified public agencies such as schools, libraries, universities, and special institutions, places where they will be at the disposal of the student and the general public.

SCHEDULE OF VOLUMES

1. MUSIC OF THE GOLD RUSH ERA
  2. A SAN FRANCISCO SONGSTER
  3. THE LETTERS OF MISKA HAUSER
  4. CELEBRITIES IN EL DORADO
  5. FIFTY LOCAL PRODIGIES
  6. EARLY MASTER TEACHERS
  7. HANDBOOK OF COMPOSERS
  8. A CENTURY OF PEDAGOGUES
  9. A CHILD'S HISTORY OF MUSIC IN EL DORADO
  10. INSTRUMENT-MAKERS: MUSIC PUBLISHING
  11. METAMORPHOSES OF POPULAR MUSIC
  12. A GUIDE TO SAN FRANCISCO MUSIC
    - 12a. GENERAL INDEX TO SERIES
    - 12b. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE
- (S.F. Public Library)

San Francisco, California  
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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.



